Shepherds

MARCH, 1956

COMMISSION ON
MEMBERSHIP AND EVANGELISM
IN THE
LOCAL CHURCH

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For Commission on Membership and Evangelism in the Local Church

March, 1956

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Geo. H. Jones, *Editor*
Gordon Pratt Baker, *Editorial Associate*
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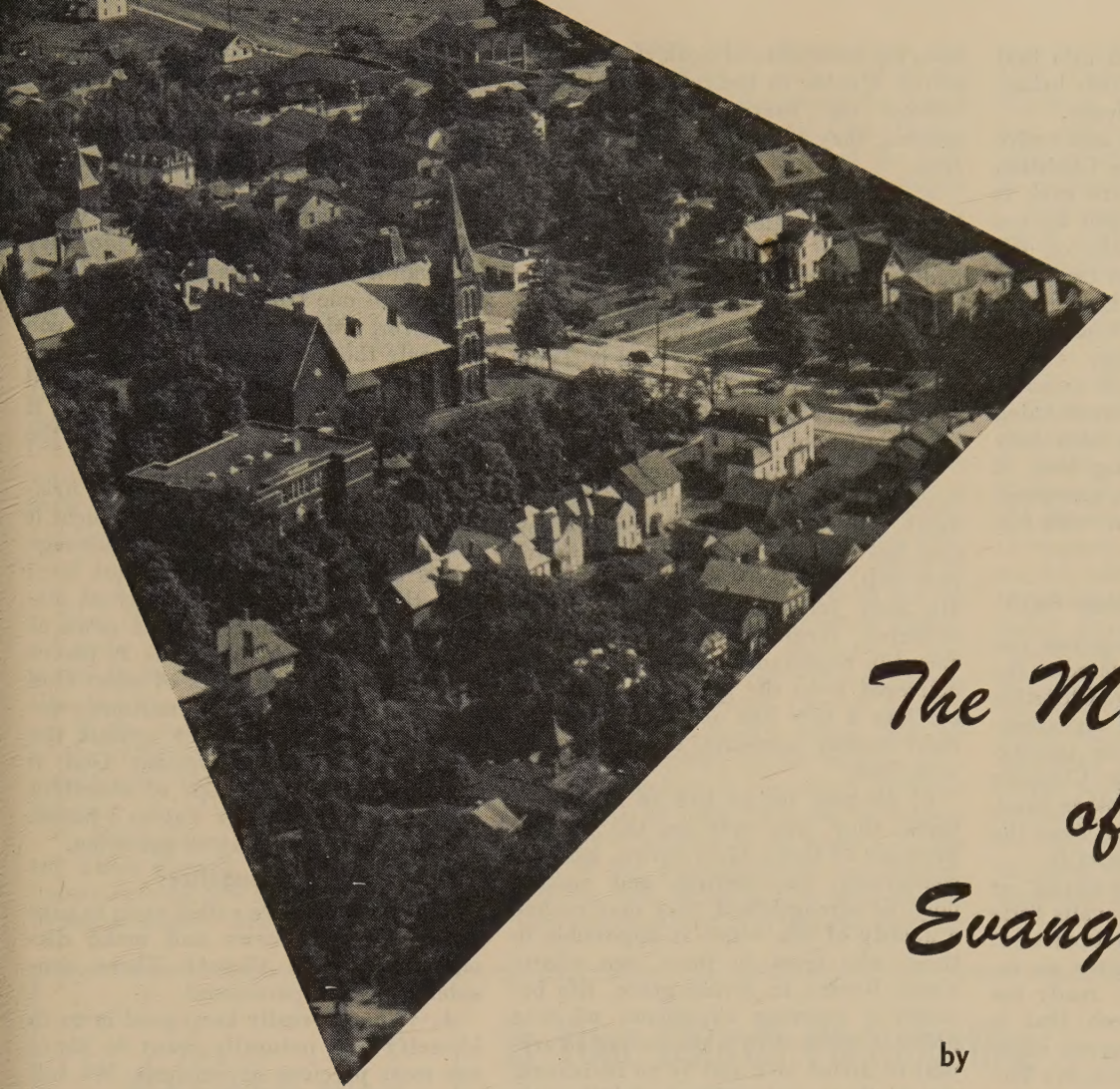

The Meaning of Evangelism

by

S. Paul Schilling

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Boston University School of Theology

AMONG Christians today there exists "an almost chaotic confusion as to the meaning and scope of evangelism." So declared a preparatory commission reporting to the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches. The judgment is probably valid.

Evangelism may mean anything from a purely ethical appeal to follow Jesus to an urgent call to avoid damnation by accepting Christ as Son of God. It may be little more than an effort to add names to the church roll, or it may seek to bring men under the power of the reconciling love of God disclosed in Jesus Christ. The invitation to Christian discipleship may come through earnest preaching to thousands or quiet conversation with individuals. The change may be seen as wrought wholly by God or mainly by human choice. Converts may be won through the contagion of a personal Christian witness which demonstrates in life the message proclaimed in words. Or the evangelist, conceiving his task as that of "selling Jesus," or marketing a superior product, may resort to promotional devices and super-salesmanship techniques which violate the dignity and integrity of persons and prostitute the gospel.

What Is Evangelism?

Urgently important, therefore, is an effort to think through just what we Christians mean by evangelism. What is it? What are its goals? How is it related to the basic convictions of our Christian faith? Why should we evangelize? What principles should guide our evangelistic activities? Questions like these involve really a philosophy or theology of evangelism. Adequate discussion of them is obviously impossible in a brief article. However, a few relevant suggestions may be offered.

Evangelism is the proclamation, in word or deed, of the Christian evangel with the aim of winning a positive response. It is the endeavor to bring persons wholeheartedly to accept and live by the good news of the redemptive love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. It has three main goals:

1. It seeks to introduce individuals to God and lead them into a personal relationship with Him. It seeks God-centered, God-controlled lives—persons who, through Christ, have found their commanding loyalty and their supreme source of spiritual power. By confronting people with the suffering, forgiving, triumphant love of God manifest in

Christ, it tries to guide them into that life of sonship with God which brings victory over sin, fear, and death.

2. It aims to lead persons into active participation in the life of the Christian community, the Church, where each is strengthened by the others and all are nourished by a common life of the Spirit. Those who respond to God's redeeming love thus enter a redemptive fellowship which is at once a source of power and a channel of service.

3. It endeavors to bring all areas of life under the rule of God. Proclaiming the kingship of one who is both holy righteousness and reconciling love, it aims to transform all human groupings and institutions in accordance with His will.

Evangelism and the Christian Faith

The full meaning of evangelism can be grasped only when it is related to the central affirmations of the Christian faith. On the one hand, such a perspective will make clear both the inevitability and the nature of the Church's evangelistic mission. On the other hand, it will help to save our appeal from the superficiality which often besets it.

To invite others to "accept Christ" or "give their hearts to Jesus" avails little unless we help them to understand what this means. "If the bugle gives an indistinct sound who will get ready for battle?" If we "utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said?" (Cf. I Cor. 14:8, 9.) The life commitment to which we summon people is a momentous step, and they have a right to know what it involves. To what and to whom are they asked to dedicate themselves? If we fail to give clear answers to questions like these, we shall win not convinced disciples of Jesus Christ, but additional multitudes of shallow, indifferent, merely nominal Christians like those whose names are already so numerous on our church rolls.

The heart of the Christian good news may perhaps be summarized in nine brief statements.

1. God has created all men for sonship with Himself and loving fellowship with each other in the realization of divine ends.

2. Men have failed to fulfill their high destiny. Flouting the intention of God for their lives, they have chosen instead their own unworthy goals. "All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). As a result, they are torn by conflict within themselves, at odds with each other, and alienated from God.

3. Men are therefore in need of salvation, but incapable of achieving it themselves. Unable in their own strength to remove the barriers their sin has erected, they need the saving power of God.

4. Men nevertheless have the capacity for redemption. They can be reclaimed. The image of God in them is badly blurred and distorted, but not completely effaced. It can be renewed. As Phillips Brooks put it, "Man is not a child of the devil whom God is trying to steal, but a child of God on whom the devil has laid his hands." Man can be made whole.

5. God has acted decisively in history to reconcile men to Himself. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has revealed His victorious power over evil, the death of human sin and His holy judgment upon it, and His suffering, forgiving love. As men respond in repentance and trust, they are delivered from the guilt and power of sin into a new life of inner harmony, right human relations, and fellowship with God.

6. As men try to live as new creatures, they may rely on the abiding presence of God's Holy Spirit, guiding, comforting, empowering, and making holy. So strengthened, they may realize a quality of life which is impossible to those who trust in their own efforts alone. Rooted in divine grace, life becomes a growing experience of true holiness, marked by a deepening awareness of divine love and by an increasing sensitivity to and ability to fulfill man's responsibilities to his fellows. So to live is to "press on" toward that mature manhood in Christ which is our true destiny.

7. To carry forward the redemptive work begun in Christ, God called forth His Church, the worshiping, witnessing, serving fellowship of those who have responded to His redeeming love, and who in the power of His Spirit seek to manifest that love and realize His Kingdom. It is commissioned to disclose the life of God to men and to lift the life of men to God.

8. The goal of human history is the Kingdom of God. Proclaimed in the coming of Jesus Christ, the reign of God is made real wherever the life of man is ordered according to the divine will, though its complete fulfillment may be expected only beyond history. Basically the gift of God, the Kingdom nevertheless requires the free response of men who are not puppets but persons. We are summoned so to open our hearts to the love, the power, and the wisdom of God that His Kingdom may come and His will may be done on earth.

9. God acts to save men not only from sin, but from the other evils which assail them. To men torn by doubt and anxiety and tempted to despair, the Christian evangel proclaims that "in everything God works for good with those who love him." To those for whom life seems a meaningless journey through a vale of tears ending in death, it sings of one from whose love nothing whatever, either in life or in death, can separate those who trust in Him (Rom. 8:28, 38, 39). To all who turn to God in love and trustful obedience, it promises the ultimate triumph of the divine righteousness.

Such is the faith from which Christian evangelism springs and which it seeks to share. The Christian message meets human need at its deepest level with the love of God in its highest disclosure. Over against the bad news of man's guilt and helplessness it places the supremely good news of what God has done in Christ and is constantly doing as Holy Spirit. Over against the despair of existence without God it places the Christian hope of abundant and eternal life in our Father's house. Here, truly, is the way of salvation.

Why Evangelize?

Why, then, are we called upon to proclaim the good news and make disciples of Jesus Christ? Three considerations are paramount.

1. Who can really keep good news to himself? We naturally want to share our most precious experiences. We tell others of bargains, eating places, autumn leaves, sunsets, books, movies, and vacations. Shall we keep quiet about the most significant experience of all? Silence at this point raises a serious question as to whether we have anything to share. Do we profess more than we possess? Moreover, what faith we have dies unless we share it. In the words of the Evanston Assembly, "if it stops with us, it begins to fade in us."

2. The very nature of our faith makes evangelism unavoidable. There is an inescapable logic about our claim for Christ as Saviour. If He is truly the world's Redeemer, He should be made known to all who need redemption, whoever and wherever they are. Again, if the Church is truly a redemptive fellowship charged with carrying forward the work which Christ began, it cannot avoid evangelizing. Sharing the good news is for the true Church, not an optional extra, but the very essence of its life. As the Central Committee of the World Council said at Rolle in 1951, "To be a Christian is necessarily to be involved in a mission to the world."

3. There is a particular urgency about the present moment in history. Some doors have already closed. Other opportunities are now open which may not remain open much longer. We live in a revolutionary epoch, with many faiths competing for the souls of men. In Africa and much of Asia time is fast running out. In the United States the situation is much different, but the net result for evangelism is the same. The very openness to religious influences which now seem to characterize American life makes it imperative that the gospel be presented as vigorously, intelligently, and persuasively as possible while people are receptive and aware of their need. "Now is the accepted time" (II Cor. 6:2).

The Scope of Evangelism

The Christian evangelistic task is not only imperative, but universal in scope. In its fulfillment the whole Christian and the whole Christian fellowship act in the power of God to redeem the whole of life in the whole world. More specifically, this means at least three things.

1. Evangelism is the responsibility of the whole Church. The New Testament knows nothing of a sharp distinction between ministers and laymen. In fact, the very word laity comes from the Greek *laos*, people, a term used in the New Testament to designate the whole Church, all the people of God. Hence the laity *are* the Church, and the task of the Church is their task. Ministers are themselves layman, and every layman has a sacred ministry.

A preparatory report to the Evanston Assembly wisely defined evangelism as "the impact of the whole Christian community upon those outside its life." This assigns to non-clerical laymen the primary responsibility. They are in far closer contact with those to be reached than are the clergy. The Church is not a building, or even a congregation in a building; it is a redemptive fellowship which exists wherever its members live, work, study, and play. In the midst of these day-by-day experiences it has its greatest opportunity to proclaim Christ. If it fails here, no amount of oral preaching by the clergy will make much difference. The whole Church has an apostolate in Christ's name. We all share His ministry to the world.

2. Evangelism is concerned with the whole life of man. It seeks to release the power of God in all aspects of the life of the individual—in his feeling, willing, and thinking, as well as his physical existence. It is likewise directed to every phase of the group life of mankind. Family, education, health, housing, work, recreation, government, racial and international relations—all are spheres where God's saving work must be performed.

3. Evangelism is directed to the whole world. Christ's commission is not directed to any geographical area. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). The world *is* our parish.

Living Demonstration

Understood in this way, evangelism culminates not in verbal declaration, but in living demonstration. In the New Testament the Christian witness occurs simultaneously through proclamation (*kerygma*), fellowship (*koinonia*), and service (*diakonia*). The same is true of the most effective Christian witnessing today. Preaching the good news, even "gossiping the gospel" in men's daily associations, must be accompanied by the manifestation of its transforming power in action. Our most convincing testimony is lives made new by the divine love we preach. As Evanston affirmed, "The seeds of the Kingdom are not words and arguments, but the children of the Kingdom themselves, scattered and sown in the field of the world."

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TO WIN VERDICTS FOR CHRIST
THE CHURCH MUST MAKE

Every Member a Christian Evangelist

CONSECRATED CONCERN WILL SOLVE A MAJOR PROBLEM IN CHRISTENDOM

ONE of the Church's perennial problems is that of making contact with the outsider and the unbeliever—not physical contact which, though it requires determination and sagacity, is not impossible, but intellectual and spiritual contact.

Wrong Thinking

Among many of those who would claim to think, the impression has grown that science, which as they suppose is so much more definite and factual, has completely elbowed religion out of life and left no room for any spiritual conception of man. Even if their so-called thinking is less than half-baked, it nevertheless gives them some comfort and self-satisfaction. What need is there for God in a world in which man is so quickly winning the mastery over nature, and in which so much that ministers to his conceit can be set out positively and explicitly? Why trouble about Kipling's "cold Christ and tangled Trinities" when science is as plain as dogma is abstruse?

No scientist worth his salt makes such claims, for he knows that they cannot be maintained. But what a vast amount of assumption there is masquerading as knowledge. It might deceive the very elect, to say nothing of those who are only too ready to accept it for truth.

A Great Problem

These deceived make up a very large part of the Church's constituency in the modern world, among whom it has to win a verdict for Christ. The great problem is that of contact and communication. The ordinary church activities do not touch them; and preaching, even if they would hear it, comes to them in a language they do not understand. This is not by any means always due to any fault in the preacher. It is probably true, or beginning to be true, that though they are outside the Church, many of them are feeling that, since they get little satisfaction elsewhere, only the Church, or what the Church stands for, can help them.

—Harold M. Lambert

Every facet of daily life provides opportunities for personal witnessing.

But how are they to be reached? We are persuaded that no small part of the answer to this vital question is to be found in the ministry of the ordinary members of the Church. This does not mean a lessening of the duty and service of the ordained ministry. But laymen and women have access to thousands who are rarely, if ever, within the orbit of the minister. This opportunity is provided in the daily life and employment of great numbers in factories and other places in industry, in offices and shops, in all the hundred ways in which men and women go about their business and earn their bread.

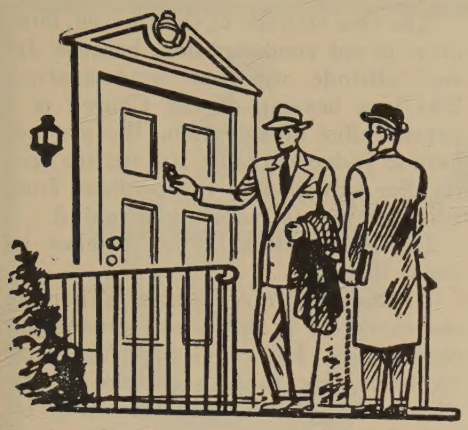
Duty and Privilege

At all times, and especially in these years of concerted and concentrated efforts to bring Christ before the people, the duty and privilege is laid upon every member of the Church to give such witness to Christ and His saving power as will set men and women thinking.

This does not necessarily mean that they will be continually dinning religion into the ears of their associates. But this is a ministry in which all can engage, even if they can do nothing else. And if they do this, they will be doing the thing that matters most, making effectual contact with those who are not likely to be otherwise reached, and communicating to them the way of life.

—Adapted from *The Methodist Recorder,* London, England

". . . Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." (Luke 14:23.)



Why We Visit

by

Lowell Brestel Hazzard

Professor of Old Testament

Westminster Theological Seminary

Westminster, Maryland

IT is not enough simply to carry on a recruitment program. Inviting people to join the Church as we invite them to join a club, relying primarily on the argument of duty and getting a grudging acceptance, is inadequate.

Christianity is not primarily a demand. It is first of all an offer. Christianity is something all men need. Therefore we go out, not to enlist support, but to confer a blessing.

Why do we visit? When we visit, what do we have to offer?

I

We visit to bring a Friend to the lonely.

Most of us do not realize how many lonely people there are in the world. People move so frequently these days. They are constantly uprooted and alone. We go, first of all, simply to present to people a friendly face.

You see, Jesus was friendly. I do not know how he did it, but everywhere he went he made friends with people.

There were the twelve disciples who left everything they had to go along with him.

There was Simon's wife's mother, who responded to his friendly presence to get up out of a sickbed and minister to him.

There was Simon the Pharisee, who invited Jesus to dinner, and the sinful woman who threw herself impulsively at his feet. They did not like one another, but they both loved Jesus.

There was Zacchaeus the publican, whose heart went out to Jesus when Jesus was a guest in his home.

There was the rich young man, who could not quite bring himself to make the sacrifices that discipleship involves, but who "went away sorrowful."

There were the mothers who brought their little children to him and the children who sat on his lap.

There were people like Mary and Martha and the two who lived at Emmaus.

There were Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

All kinds of people loved Jesus because he was their friend.

So we go out in the name of Jesus to offer simple friendship. "Come with us," we say, "and you will find friendliness." Of course that puts a great burden on the church, for the friendly Jesus can only be represented by friendly disciples. When we go to visit, to bring a Friend to the lonely, we represent no small set or exclusive group.

The church cannot be an executive's church or a working class church. It cannot be a foreigner's church or a "simon-pure" American church. It may, in certain communities, haye to reconsider its complexion. Our attitude, as we go to visit, must be the attitude of simple friendliness, because we represent the One who was a Friend to all. And when people come to the church, they must find the kind of welcome that will warm their hearts. This people need, and this we visit and bring—a Friend to the lonely.

II

We visit to bring a challenge to the indifferent.

Let us remember that often the indifferent are not really indifferent. Their indifference may be really a concealed antagonism arising from some unfortunate experience that they have had with religion. In any case, they will not respond to any antagonism on our part. They do not need to be preached at as from a superior height. They need to be won, not browbeaten.

When Jesus came to men, he came to them not with a sermon but with a challenge, a challenge that grew out of great good news. "The time is fulfilled," he said, "and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

Jesus came to people who lived in an unsatisfactory world. Perhaps they were poor, perhaps they were out of sorts, perhaps they felt inferior. Perhaps they were rich and friendless; perhaps they had tested power and knew its emptiness. To all these people, Jesus brought a message which challenged their very souls. "Listen," he said, "there is a new world. The Kingdom of God is here."

Then Jesus went on to explain that in this new world of his followers there would be no striving after place, because the greatest was he who served. In this new world there were none of the frictions that come from divisions, because there were no barriers. In this new world there was none of the unhappiness that rises from tension, because the only law was love.

"Change your ways," he urged, "believe this good news." Many, feeling a new hope, responded to the challenge and entered a new life. I wonder whether we believe enough in what Jesus believed in to get people excited about it.

Surely this is a desperate kind of world. It is a world in which every new generation of youth has its life disrupted by wars; a world in which from the start we are immersed in the struggle to get ahead, and men are handicapped by circumstances; a world in which we are all split up, race from race, class from class, nation from nation.

But Jesus has showed us the way to the new world. He has given us the way of love, in which we respond to unkindness with kindness, to injustice with friendliness, to hatred with good will.

He has given the way of humility and service. "In the world their great ones exercise authority over them, but it shall

not be so among you." "He that would be first . . . shall be servant of all." He has proposed the way of brotherhood. Barriers go down because they are disregarded.

Jesus calls for volunteers to come and live in the Kingdom now, to start out on the new way even at the risk of life, and so to plant the seed that becomes the Kingdom, to bring into life the leaven that transforms.

Christians are Kingdom-people, forerunners of the new age, bringers of a different world. Can we be such Kingdom-people that, when we talk about the Kingdom, our speech and our lives will carry sufficient conviction? If so, our evangelism may really accomplish something. It will bring a challenge to the indifferent.

III

We visit to bring help to the disheartened, discouraged, and sad.

Life is so full of tragedy in these days that we find these people frequently. What do we have to bring them?

1. We have *a faith that overcomes worrying.*

One of the most important things that our Master, Jesus, brought to men was his faith in God. He really believed in God, from a little child. When he grew to be a man, he told people everywhere about the God in whom we can trust. "Why are you anxious," he said, "concerning what you shall eat or drink or wear?" "Consider the lilies of the field." "Consider the birds of the heavens." "Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat, drink, wear? . . . After all these things do pagans seek." "Your heavenly Father knows what things you have need of before you ask him."

When Jesus talked about prayer, he said, "Think of God as a father and talk with him about anything. He will always help." "What man of you that is a father," said Jesus, "if his son should ask for bread would give a stone, if he should ask for a fish would give a serpent, if he should ask for an egg would give a scorpion? If you then who are evil know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him?"

It was because Jesus believed thus in God that he had such tremendous power over sickness. Therefore we can tell people they need not worry, but may put their trust in the Heavenly Father.

2. We have *a trust that transforms suffering.*

So many people have been embittered by tragedy that has come into their lives. They want to have nothing to do with God since they blame him for permitting them to have trouble. But Christians know something about suffering that no one else knows, namely, that we can use it as a blessing to others. Jesus died on a cross, and yet his suffering became not tragedy but blessing. God turned it from one to the other.

God can turn tragedy into blessing for us. There are things we can never do for people until we have suffered. When we use our suffering to make us better servants of God, then it is no longer tragedy but blessing. We can share the good news of this sublimation of suffering.

3. We have *a certainty that overcomes death.*

Christians do not believe that death ends all. We believe in personal immortality for several major reasons:

We believe in immortality because Jesus rose from the dead.

We believe in immortality because we believe in the significance of human personality. "God," said Jesus, "is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

We believe in immortality because we believe in God's love. "I could not believe in a universe," said George Herbert Palmer when his wife died, "which in deference to a few particles of disordered matter could exclude so fair a spirit."

We have a great message for the saddened people we visit, to bring help to the disheartened.

IV

We visit to bring healing to the sinful.

Believe it or not, there are still people in our communities who feel a sense of sin. They are not good enough to belong to the Church, they say. Or, if they do not have a sense of sin after that fashion, they show it by going on the defensive. They are every bit "as good as those hypocrites in the Church," they say. Whichever way you meet it, it is there. People have consciences and they feel that they are not as good as they ought to be.

Now, usually, these people are on the defensive because they expect the Church to condemn them. The Church stands for goodness. The Church probably disapproves of much that they do. Therefore they want nothing to do with the Church. It will only make them feel inferior. And often enough, the Church does condemn them. The Church is full of people of Pharisaic temperament who like nothing better than looking down their noses at their fellows and thanking God that they are better than they.

The true attitude of the Church, however, is not condemnation, because Jesus' attitude was not condemnation. The true bearing of the Church is a joyous offer of salvation. We are not here to judge anybody. But we are here to offer salvation to the penitent from whatever sin is troubling mankind.

Let us see what Jesus teaches us about this:

1. *Jesus never condemned.* There is one exception to this. Jesus condemned condemners. He condemned the self-righteous. He said to certain of the Pharisees, "Woe to you who heap on men burdens greater than they can bear, and you yourselves touch not the burdens with your little finger." But Jesus never condemned sinners. He condemned their sins. He was sorry for them. But he never condemned them. "Neither do I condemn thee," he said to the woman taken in adultery. "Go and sin no more."

2. *He offered* to all sinners *the love of God* rather than condemnation. To the poor paralytic he said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." And he told the story of the prodigal son received back, without a word of reproach, into the father's house.

3. Therefore, *we come with a message of salvation.* We say to sinners:

(1) God loves you. Paul discovered this on the Damascus road when the Jesus he had been persecuting appeared to him.

(2) God sent his Son to prove his love for you. "God commendeth his own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

(3) All you need to do is to give your life to Jesus Christ and he will transform it. He transformed Peter and Paul and John. He transformed John Wesley and Albert Schweitzer. He transforms you and me. No one need feel sinful. No one need be on the defensive. Life given to Christ is on the road to salvation. It grows better and better day by day.

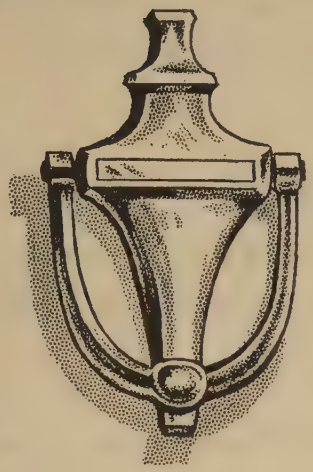
So, as we visit, we go with a message to sinners, too—a message of healing to the sinful.

SUMMARY

We visit, not simply to get people to join the Church. We visit to bring:

a Friend to the lonely,
a challenge to the indifferent,
help to the disheartened,
and healing to the sinful.

The foregoing article is available from TIDINGS *in leaflet form at 5¢ per copy; 10 or more, 4¢ each.*



Lent——

SEASON FOR LAY VISITATION

Evangelism

ONE of the most vital seasons evangelistically is the Lenten period, which begins this year on February 15. As men and women turn their thoughts more and more to the meaning of Calvary, they become increasingly sensitive to spiritual appeals and more responsive to the "love of Christ which constraineth us." We can win them to the Master's fold if we carefully plan to go after them. Because we can win them, we have a responsibility to win them.

Evidence of Responsibility

This responsibility is apparent in the fact that approximately 69,000,000 people in the United States have no church relationships. To bring them in, we must present them with the claims of Christ. And to do that, we must go where they are. We must visit them, person by person, family by family, in their homes. We must allow none to perish for want of the Word.

In addition to these unchurched individuals, there are numerous "displaced churchmen" who must be reactivated in the Lord's work before they are lost.

Many of these "displaced churchmen" are persons who have changed their residences in the course of the past year. The Census Bureau reports that, for the year ending in April, 1955, an estimated 31,492,000 Americans moved. About 68 per cent of these moved to new residences in the same county; about 5,500,000 changed their place of residence from one county to another within the same state; and almost 5,000,000 transferred from one state to another.

Large numbers of these persons have been church school leaders and teachers, youth leaders, workers in the men's organizations, officers and members of the women's groups, choir members, trustees, and stewards. Yet many of them fail to transfer their membership to the church in the community in which they are living. As a consequence, such persons have only a casual contact with the church. Some no longer have a contact at all.

To meet this responsibility every church should conduct a carefully organized program of Lay Visitation Evangelism. Lent provides every pastor and congregation with a magnificent opportunity for such a program.

The Fishermen's Club

During the weeks preceding Easter, lay visitors ought to call in the homes in behalf of Christ on at least two Sunday afternoons and every Monday night during Lent. One of the surest ways to do this effectively is through the Fishermen's Club. If a church does not now have a Club, it should by all means organize one no later than the first Sunday afternoon in Lent for the purpose of promoting and doing the visiting.

The pastor, in cooperation with the Local Church Commission on Membership and Evangelism, must organize and promote the Fishermen's Club. Its size is not of first importance. Christ began the fellowship of fishermen with just two men. Today there are many small churches which have only tiny groups such as Jesus had. Sometimes there are just two persons, possibly a couple of men, or a husband and wife. Larger churches have Fishermen's Clubs of 10, 20, 50, and 70 or more persons who meet regularly and then spread out across a designated area to find people for Christ.

Suggested Programs

Best results are obtained by the Fishermen's Club when it follows a program of basic training emphasizing such essentials of evangelistic visiting as

1. How to secure the commitment
2. The nine steps of effective visiting
3. How to handle unusual situations
4. Family visiting, and a continuation program.

These essential items are best presented by the use of the Turn Over Chart, "They Went Forth—Two by Two," —available from TIDINGS—in a special week of supper conferences. These conferences should be followed by actual interviews seeking commitments to Christ. The first week in Lent, or the week immediately prior thereto, would be excellent for this training program.

The Club should meet regularly throughout the year for training, assignment, and sharing of evangelistic experiences. But, certainly, during Lent, it should have regular programs of instruction and visitation.

The Pastor as Director

The Fishermen's Club gives the pastor an opportunity to direct the evangelistic endeavors of the church in the most effective manner. The group should be under his guidance and supervision. This is an opportunity for the lay-

men to show loyalty and devotion to the pastor as their spiritual leader. The pastor should set the time for the meeting, assign the names, pair the teams, and give the instructions. Here are suggested items for the program:

Season of prayer, prayer for certain unchurched persons in the community, report of successful visits, discussion of certain problems and situations—such as unusual situations and how to meet them—review of special pages in the Turn Over Charts, and reports at each meeting.

The fellowship between the pastor and the members of the Fishermen's Club as they proceed with "the greatest work in the world"—winning others to Christ and His Church—affords them joy and mutual appreciation. But, what is more important, it insures a marvelous ingathering during the season which, above all others, emphasizes the Atonement and the Resurrection.

Specific Plans

Three other effective possibilities are open to the local church

1. A Week of Lay Visitation Evangelism may be planned immediately prior to or at the beginning of Lent. The pastor may enlist the visitors to share in a four-night School of Lay Visitation Evangelism. The program for each night then calls for supper, specific training, and visitation in the homes to secure commitments for Christ and the Church. On the closing night of Lay Visitation Evangelism Week, the pastor forms the group into a permanent organization. The visitors agree to visit for Christian commitments at regular intervals—during Lent, on at least two Sunday afternoons and each Monday night.

2. The pastor may form his permanent evangelistic visitation group by inviting certain carefully selected people to enroll in the Fishermen's Club. These persons are selected by the pastor in cooperation with the Commission on Membership and Evangelism on the basis of their Christian character, churchmanship, and ability.

3. Palm Sunday afternoon to Wednesday night of Holy Week may be devoted to Visitation Evangelism, with those won during these days being brought to the church on Holy Thursday to share the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper with these who obtained their commitments. On Friday they should be encouraged to be present for "Churchmen's Night," when they could be introduced to the various leaders and receive training in the basic beliefs and objectives of the Church.

The Power of Visitation Evangelism

In every community there are people who do not know Christ, or have neglected to move their church memberships, and who will never enter the Christian life unless some layman visits them with the invitation, "Come with us to Christ." Amazing results are being obtained wherever Visitation Evangelism is being worked. Within a short time, many churches have increased their memberships, and some have doubled their memberships as a result of regular lay visitation.

Even the smallest churches can work this program successfully. As a matter of fact, any pastor can train eight laymen to win 14 persons in four weeks! The plan is simple and, carefully followed, can be used very effectively in the individual churches on circuit charges. In essence, the plan is as follows:

First Week

Pastor and Layman A visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Pastor and Layman B visit on Thursday night.
Win one person.
Total: two persons won.

Second Week

Layman A and Layman B visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Pastor and Layman C visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Pastor and Layman D visit together on Thursday night.
Win one person.
Total: five persons won in two weeks.

Third Week

Layman A and Layman B visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Layman C and Layman D visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Pastor and Layman E visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Pastor and Layman F visit together on Thursday night.
Win one person.
Total: nine persons won in three weeks.

Fourth Week

Layman A and Layman B visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Layman C and Layman D visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Layman E and Layman F visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Pastor and Layman G visit together on Monday night.
Win one person.
Pastor and Layman H visit together on Thursday night.
Win one person.
Total: fourteen persons won in four weeks.

Try this during Lent! You will be amazed by the results you obtain if you conscientiously follow the plan.

A team of laymen visit in a home to present the claims of the Master as they bear their Christian witness.

Practical Pointers for Visitation Evangelism in Your Lenten Program

Principles of Effective Visiting

1. **Interview your prospect** in a favorable environment. In the home in the quiet of the evening is best.
2. **Create a favorable atmosphere,** and have genuine interest in your prospect.
3. **Use team work.** Let there be only one conversation in the room; a second conversation is static and distracting.
4. **Ask questions** tactfully, but do not monopolize conversation.
5. **Be a good listener,** but do not accept any excuse. Use the "Yes—but" psychology.
6. **Use the agreement psychology**—Avoid "No" or "Not now."
7. **Face emergency situations.** Relate your experience or ask questions.
8. **Use the "Talking Points" below.** They secure results.
9. **Be optimistic.** Expect favorable results.
10. **Visit for a verdict.** Secure the decision and have it recorded.
11. When the prospect is convinced, **close the case** with some form of consecration.

How to Conduct an Interview

1. When you enter a home, **take an interest** in the family. Pay particular attention to the children. Talk with them. You may observe flowers or some object in the home which you can admire. Your appreciation and friendliness create a favorable environment for your visit. (This can be done while being seated.)
2. **Inform the prospect** about the visitation endeavor and the purpose of your visit. "This is Visitation Week at the————church, and members are calling on all the friends of our church."
3. **Learn your prospect's attitude** and religious background. "Since your children are in the church school (or the reason stated on the Prospect Card), you are probably a member of a church somewhere?" If you need additional information, some such question may be asked: "May I inquire what church or church school you or your parents attended during youth?" A smile of genuine friendliness with such personal questions is well received. A pause gives your prospect time to explain his past religious connections.
4. **Direct the conversation,** making use of some of the "talking points" of visitation evangelism to prepare the way for the decision. "You believe in the ideals and principles for which Christ and the Church stand. The challenge surely comes to you as to everyone else, that you should become a Christian." Do not proceed too fast. Permit him to take part in the conversation. Talk about the excuses he makes but do not let excuses sidetrack the main issue. Direct the conversation so that before you are through your prospect honestly talks about the reason why he should become a Christian and unite with the Church.
5. **Secure the decision.** After you feel that the prospect is convinced that he become a Christian, present him with a "Record of Commitment" card and have him record his commitment before you leave.

Ten Effective Talking Points

1. **Conscience.** "You believe in Christ and realize that you should be a Christian." Many prospects will say, "I have no argument against it. I know it is what I should do."
2. **The Intellectual Appeal** receives a fine response. "You believe and accept the teachings of Christ. Then, the example and influence of your life should be for Christ and the Church." Challenge the prospect to act on his convictions now.
3. **The Appeal of Duty** may be presented as something the prospect owes to himself, his children, a Christian wife, Christian parents, friends, or society.
4. **Spiritual Help** is available. The prospect is told that his habits and conduct must be changed to conform to the Christian way of living. He is given guidance about his

daily devotional and prayer habits so that the spirit of Christ will come into his life and transform, purify, and strengthen his character.

5. **The Appeal for a Christian Home** includes parental responsibility for the moral and religious training of children. Most parents will sacrifice and make any necessary adjustment in life for the welfare of home and children.
6. **Christian Friendship.** The Christian decision of husband, wife, children, or friends is the deciding factor for many prospects. The information that friends expect to unite with the Church encourages others to make decisions.
7. **The Personal Interest Appeal** is very effective. "I would like to have you become a Christian and unite with the Church." There are many who never have had anyone to speak to them about Christ, the Christian life, or membership in the Church.
8. **Service.** The appeal for Christian service is very effective with youth, young married people, and modern businessmen who have a vision of community service.
9. **Influence.** Each person wants this world to be better because he has lived in it. To become a Christian and unite with the Church is one of the best things that anyone can do, and his example will benefit others.
10. **World Conditions.** The teachings of Christ are the fundamental principles that undergird democracy. A spiritual mobilization is needed! The Church was never more necessary than now.

Record of Commitment

Equip your laymen with a supply of **Record of Commitment Folders** which help keep the records straight. The final goal of visitation evangelism is to get the person visited to commit his life to Christ. This folder is not only helpful in securing the commitment but necessary for careful follow-up and church records. The pastor uses the Record of Commitment Folders to plan his spiritual guidance visit, to arrange for training in the Christian life and reception into the church on Membership Sunday, and to help the newly won Christian in feeling at home in the church fellowship. His visit gives time for prayer and devotional emphasis.

To Win Your Prospects

YOU MUST GO WHERE THEY ARE

Visitation Evangelism Packet

Every church should order a Visitation Evangelism Packet, according to its size, as listed below. Each packet contains the minimum materials necessary for Visitation Evangelism. Every church should also order a TURN OVER CHART. (See *below.*)

These packets contain the following items in quantities:

Prospect and Assignment Cards
Visitation Agreement Cards
Record of Commitment Folders
Assignment and Report Folders
Set of five Review Pieces for each visitor
Guidance Folders for New Members
Commissioning Service for Visitors

Order packet nearest the number of your active membership

100 members, $ 3.00	600 members, 15.00	1,250 members, 27.50
200 members, 5.00	700 members, 17.50	1,500 members, 30.00
300 members, 7.50	800 members, 20.00	1,750 members, 32.50
400 members, 10.00	900 members, 22.50	2,000 members, 35.00
500 members, 12.50	1,000 members, 25.00	

Visitation Evangelism Turn Over Charts

$12.00 a set

Designed so that a pastor can use them to train his laymen, these charts may be used over and over again. Contain 118 poster-size pages (18"x28"). Two colors.

TIDINGS, Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials
1908 Grand Ave., Nashville 5, Tenn.

Lent Is an Excellent Time For Every Local Church to Plan

The Sunday Night Revival

MAKE no mistake about it. The Sunday night service can transform your church. Its informal nature and evangelistic character can instill new life into your people and thus release new power into your community. All it requires is a holy enthusiasm and some consecrated planning.

Something "Extra"

That such planning results in a lot of work goes without saying. Church members expect something "extra" if they are to attend church twice on Sunday. And, certainly, it takes something "extra" to lure the unchurched away from the theaters, the skating rinks, the bowling alleys, and other places of amusement which operate so lucratively on Sunday night. Yet the very fact that these places attract the large numbers that they do only testifies to the emotional and spiritual hunger of their patrons. As Christians, we cannot deny the challenge of that testimony or the moral responsibility which inheres in it. At the same time, by constructively meeting the social and spiritual need thus manifested, we can satisfy the hungers of those who are currently outside the Church.

In the first place, the pastor must devote just as much time and care to the preparation of this service as he gives to the morning worship. While it will be informal, it must not leave the impression that everything is haphazard, as though what is being done is not too important anyway. For if the Sunday night worship is to change men's lives, it must bear witness to the kind of concern which demands only the best—the best in music, the best in preaching, the best in fellowship.

The "Fill a Pew" Plan

Experience has proved that there are several rather simple but very effective plans by which every Sunday night can be made a night of revival. Foremost among these is the "Fill a Pew" Plan, under which individuals are selected as "Pew Captains" and given the responsibility of filling certain pews by inviting their friends and neighbors to attend the services.

Local circumstances will, of course, require local adaptations; but, in general, the "Fill a Pew" Plan works as follows:

The sanctuary is divided into as many sections as its size requires. These sections are then lettered "A," "B," "C," etc., and the pews are numbered according to the section in which they are located ("A1," "B5," "D10," etc.). To prevent confusion, it is wise to type the numerals on small pieces of paper and fasten them to the arm rests by means of scotch tape.

Pew Captains Selected

Once this division has been made, the Pew Captains are selected, usually from among the men of the church, although some of the older youth may be enlisted in the enterprise. The Captains are carefully informed of the section in which they will work, the numbers of the pews which they are expected to fill, and the total number of persons for whom they are responsible. Captains are asked to serve for specific periods of time, at the expiration of which another team of Pew Captains is chosen. Frequently, this time period is from four to six weeks.

During the week, the Captains invite individuals to share the Sunday worship hour. They visit the inactive members, call upon prospects, and welcome to the church service those who have come in response to their invitation. As a result, their infectious enthusiasm persuades unchurched persons to find their places regularly before the altar on Sunday.

While the stewards of the church should be employed in

the operation of this plan, the roll of men members of the church should also be used in selecting the Pew Captains. Many who respond eagerly to the invitation to serve as Captains have been irregular or inactive. Occasional after-church meetings of the Pew Captains will provide wonderful opportunities to express appreciation and maintain enthusiasm.

A Family Night

In many churches the Sunday night program is planned with the whole family in mind.

The evening begins with a light supper, usually served about 6:00 P.M. This affords opportunity for informal fellowship in a Christian atmosphere. Families are encouraged to bring their unchurched friends, who find the warm companionship of this hour very attractive. Then, following the supper, there is a chapel service at 7:00, or a "University of Life" program in which study classes are arranged according to age and interest groups. Those attending the classes are encouraged to search the scriptures, to discuss home and community problems, to explore the various ways of vital Christian living, and to learn how every individual —man, woman, or child—is important in the Kingdom of God.

One of the distinctive advantages of this kind of program is the opportunity which it provides for those who are puzzled, or who need information, to ask the questions that will resolve their doubts as well as enlighten them. Likewise, it stresses the fact that religion is a family affair. In doing so, it provides an excellent time for demonstrating the effective use of THE UPPER ROOM and other devotional materials. Thus, it encourages the establishment of family altars.

Does Your Pastor Need to Rediscover

Visitation Evangelism?

Many young ministers who have joined Annual Conferences in recent years have never participated in organized Visitation Evangelism.

Many supply pastors, for various reasons, have never had such an organized program in their churches.

No program reaches people more effectively than Visitation Evangelism. Read the articles in this issue of *Shepherds*. Use the proved methods and materials described in these pages. Plan *now* for Visitation Evangelism.

"One-Day Revival"

Many churches have planned each Sunday night as a "one-day revival" service. This means that every Sunday night receives as much careful attention, in every detail, as the church would devote to a session of a protracted meeting. And the results are nearly always in geometrical ratio to the type of planning the program receives.

Of paramount importance in the planinng of the "One-Day Revival" is the provision for a large chorus choir. This should include as many young people as possible, since youth attract youth. The choir should use hymns, rather than anthems, for two reasons. In the first place, appropriate hymns are more likely to move individuals to make decisions for Christ and His Church. In the second place, many persons who would hesitate to sing anthems will gladly assist in a choir using hymns. Also, the choirs should sing usually as a chorus because choral singing deepens the feeling of fellowship. Sometimes the music includes a church orchestra; and when this is used to glorify God, and not simply to demonstrate skill, it is highly effective.

A well-led hymn-sing is virtually a necessity for a successful Sunday night revival. Lasting about 15 to 20 minutes, it will help to establish an expectant and happy mood. The hymns should be chosen for both their familiarity and their meaning and should help to prepare the people for the altar call climaxing the service. Gospel hymns will revive many stirring memories in the hearts of those who are emotionally and spiritually hungry and so provide the pastor with an opportunity to reach them through the worship.

Sunday Night Altar Service

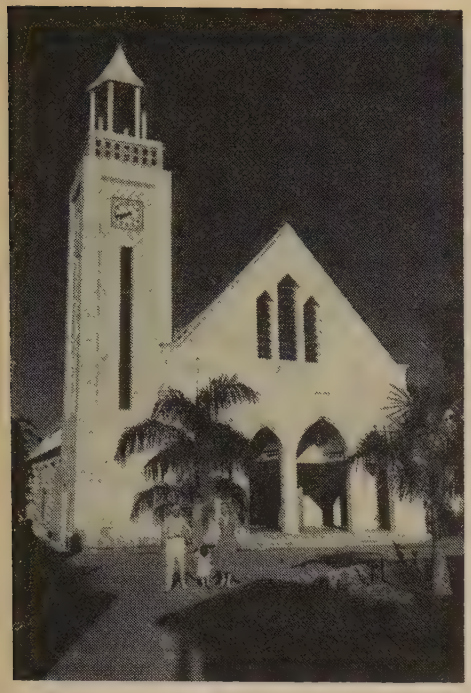
Some churches have visibly influenced their communities by regularly conducting a Sunday night altar service. In this type of service, following the hymn-sing, the responsive reading, the pastoral prayer, and the special music, all the lights are turned out except one which is focused on the Cross. The pastor then invites to the altar all those who wish to pray for the Church, for their friends, for their families, for themselves. He encourages them to bring their burdens to the Lord and to make intercession for individuals whom they are anxious to see won to Christ's Kingdom. While the people are coming to the chancel, a soloist, seated, sings a hymn of consecration. Later, when the invitation to Christian discipleship is extended following an evangelistic sermon, the power of this altar experience makes it easier for the unsaved to respond.

Whichever type of Sunday evening program the pastor and his people choose, however, experience shows that it is still essential to have preaching which is rooted in the gospel and grounded in positive beliefs. Expository sermons relating the Bible to the place where folks live possess an almost irresistible appeal. One minister in Portsmouth, Virginia, who had used a wide variety of approaches to the Sunday evening worship problem, recently stated that a sermon series of simple scriptural narrative brought larger crowds to his sanctuary than any other evening program he had conducted.

An Understandable Faith

In these trying days men and women are anxious to possess an understandable faith. A Sunday evening series of sermons on the eternal promises of God never fails to meet with heartwarming response. People will eagerly attend a series of meetings in which the great doctrines of the Church are made plain.

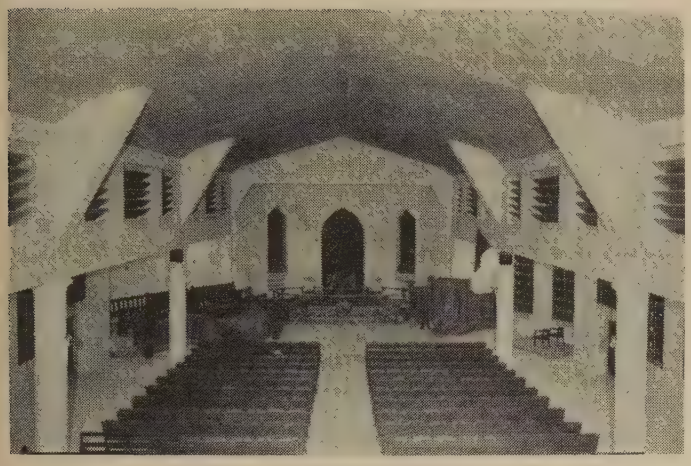
Sunday night is still one of the most promising evangelistic opportunities your church has.

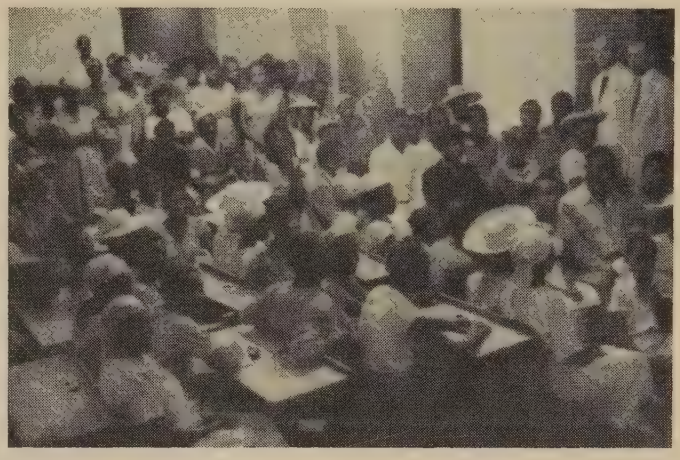


THE UPPER ROOM Begins French Edition With March-April Issue

THE new French edition of THE UPPER ROOM—LA CHAMBRE HAUTE—will appear with the March-April issue. It will be published under the direction of Rev. H. Ormonde McConnell, pastor of The Methodist Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and supervisor of all the Methodist work in Haiti. The pictures on this page are of the church in Port-au-Prince. Rev. Marco Depestre, who is associated with Mr. McConnell in the Methodist work in Haiti, will be the editor of this, the thirty-second edition of THE UPPER ROOM, which is an interdenominational, international, interracial devotional guide. Both Mr. McConnell and Mr. Depestre are ministers of the British Methodist Church.

It is hoped the French edition will circulate throughout the French speaking world. Subscriptions and orders may be attained by writing Rev. Marco Depestre, Petit Goave, Haiti.





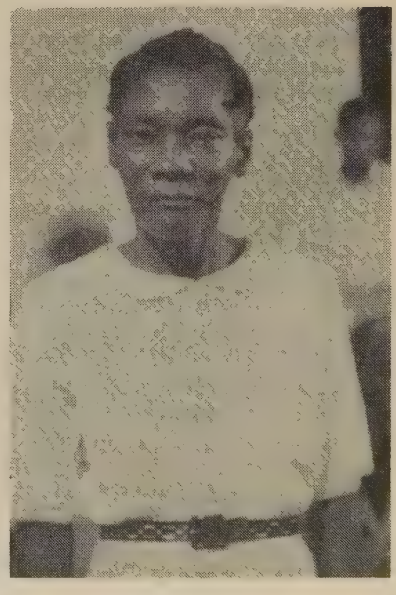
Upper left, Rev. and Mrs. H. Ormonde McConnell and daughter Edna standing before the beautiful new Methodist Church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, of which Mr. McConnell is pastor. He is also superintendent of the Methodist Haiti district.

Center left, showing the interior of the church in Port-au-Prince, which has a seating capacity of one thousand. There is a circular communion table where a six a.m. daily prayer meeting is well attended.

Center right, a preparatory class for church membership, which meets once a week for two hours, receiving instructions from Mr. McConnell and Rev. Alain Rocourt, one of the ministers in Mr. McConnell's district.

Lower left, Madame Fleurimon, who was converted recently, burned a quantity of Voodoo fetishes publicly behind the church following the six a.m. prayer meeting. For years she had persecuted her husband as he practiced Christianity. Now she is striving diligently to learn to read.

Lower right, Madame Delea Pierre who was converted ten years ago and could not read. She now not only can read but knows from memory Luke and Acts and the booklet of instructions for new converts and is a weekly class leader.



Do You Need a Good Story?

JESUS was a master storyteller. He knew the power of an illustration to help his listeners to grasp the deeper meaning. Each issue of THE UPPER ROOM is filled with fresh, vital, stimulating stories. The daily meditations are written by people from around the world. Thus we have the experience of Christians in other lands.

From this daily devotional guide we have a source of material for sermons, devotions and teaching well worth retelling. And how close a speaker feels to his audience when he tells a story and sees nods of recognition as they recall that it was read at their family altars. Then the point is really driven home. The March-April issue, containing the last four weeks of Lent and Easter Sunday, is of particular significance. Below are excerpts from this issue of THE UPPER ROOM.

"Two Christians Meet"

During the Korean war, a young man was sent to the front line. A month later, because he had an eye infection, he was sent home but without any identification papers. On the way he was taken into custody, and because he had no papers he was suspected of being a spy and soon sentenced to death.

About five minutes before he was to be shot an officer said to him, "You may have one wish before you die, what will it be? Tobacco? Rice?" The young man answered, "I want only to sing a hymn," and he began to sing, "Jesus Has Lifted the Load."

Eagerly the soldier asked, "Are you a Christian?" The young man answered, "Yes, I am." Since the officer too knew the Master, he arranged a second trial, and the young man was sent to his home in safety.

Chang Duk Yun, Korea—
Wednesday, March 14

"The Stars Return to the Heavens"

A certain man went for an interview with a well known minister. Afterward the man was heard to say, "When I went in there, all the stars had dropped out of my heaven. One by one, he put them back!"

This is what the living Christ did for the first disciples; He restored the stars of hope and faith and love. Today that is what He will do for us, too.

Gilbert L. Ramsey, Georgia—
Monday, April 2

"The Whole Story Had to Be Told"

One Holy Week morning a little boy was intently looking at the picture, "Descent from the Cross," which was on display in a store window. A stranger approached and also became interested. The boy said, "That's Jesus on the cross. Wicked men crucified Him. Those good men are taking Him down, and they are going to bury Him in a rich man's garden." The man answered, "That's right, my boy," and they parted.

Before the man was out of sight, the lad ran after him, calling, "Mister! Mister! I forgot to tell you He rose from the dead and is now alive forever."

Fred B. Wyand, West Virginia—
Thursday, April 5

"Rise to the Calm Strata"

Some airmen were returning to base, flying at low altitude over some beautiful country where land formation and bay met in charming manner. But the air currents made flying here difficult, and the plane caught in a whirl and got into danger. If forced down, life and plane might be destroyed. After they had managed a safe landing and were asked what they did to escape disaster, the answer was, "We tried to rise to the calmer strata above the disturbed one."

Daily life is full of troubles and perils. It is hard to escape from them except in seeking the calmness found in the higher regions of faith in the love, wisdom and power of God.

C. R. McKean, Nova Scotia—
Saturday, April 14

"O Love, That Wilt Not Let Me Go"

In my work as chaplain to some mentally afflicted, my constant prayer is that God will help me to make great truths simple enough for them to understand. Sometimes individuals among them show surprising grasp and insight.

For example, before reading the fifteenth chapter of Luke one day, I suggested that they should listen carefully and then tell me what feature was common to all the parables. As hoped for, a number gave the answer that the coin, the sheep and the boy were all lost.

Proceeding to expound this simple theme, I was halted by one of the patients. He left his seat and came quietly to the rostrum. In a whisper he said, "Sir, there is one other thing common to all those parables." "What is that, my friend?" I asked. "It is that God will never give anybody up."

Even a clouded mind may grasp the truth that there is a Love that will never let us go.

Frederic T. Cleverdon, Australia—
Sunday, April 15

"If God Looks Away for a Minute"

The boy and I were having a conversation. We were discussing matters of faith. Finally I said, "You know Joe, it's when we try to run things by ourselves that we make mistakes and get into trouble." He answered, "If God looked away for a minute, there would be trouble." I rejoiced that Joe knew we can rely on God.

Whatever our situation by day or by night, in health or in sickness, in success or in defeat, in joy or in grief, God is there. No area of our lives is too meaningless for His attention, no need or temptation too great for His power."

Jessie Duryea, New York—
Saturday, April 21

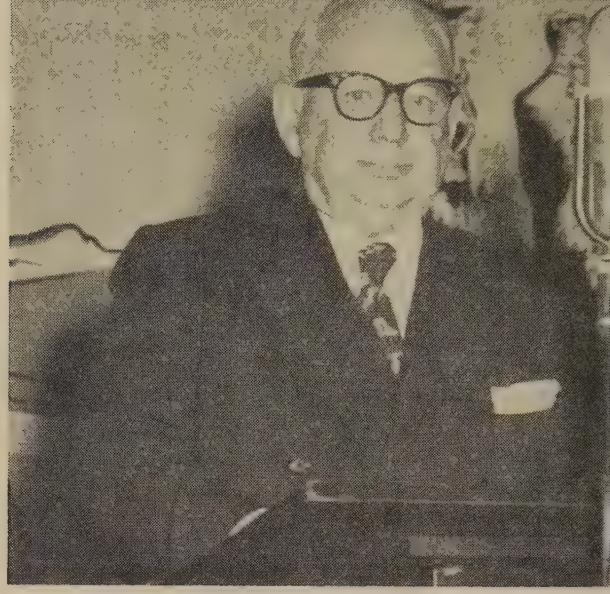
OTHER HELPFUL STORIES

"God Does Forgive"	March 3	Bessie Saunders Spencer, Colorado
"Stick to It Tom"	March 8	John Marvin Rast, South Carolina
"Giving up Algebra"	March 12	Harold W. Ewing, Ohio
"Learning to Walk"	March 16	Carolyn Jane Avery, Arizona
"Minding My Own Business"	March 17	Jose B. Catindig, Philippines
"Under Orders"	April 9	Henry R. Wilson, India
"My Son, We Have Come Home"	April 10	Roy E. Graves, Iowa
"The Pressure Lingers"	April 13	Edwin T. Iglehart, Japan

Evangelistic Meeting

AT STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA

October 13-18, 1955

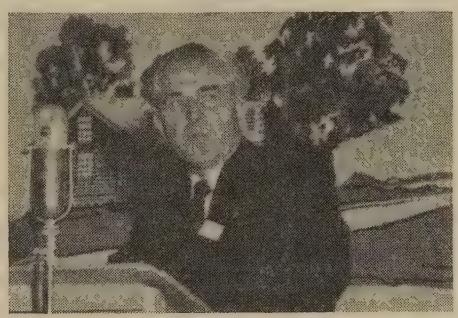


Bishop W. Angie Smith discusses evidences of a religious awakening in the United States as he brings a stirring message to the Conference on Sunday, October 16.

TWO hundred fifty clergymen from across the United States met on the campus of the Oklahoma A. and M. College, Stillwater, Oklahoma, for a six-day Conference on Evangelism from October 13 to 18. The meeting provided both information concerning evangelistic methods and achievements and inspiration to carry the claims of Christ to the farthermost reaches of the land.

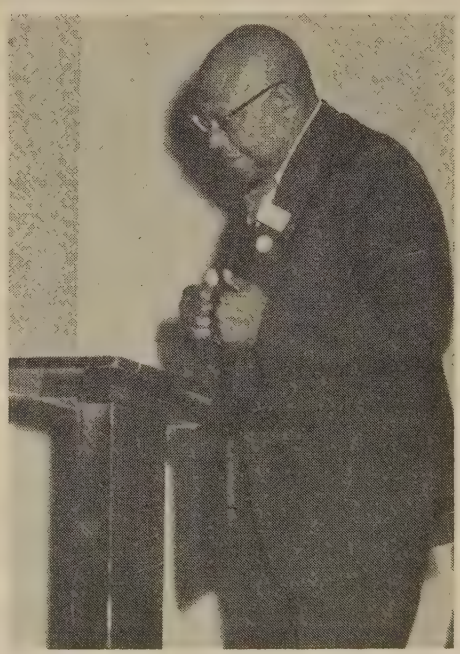
Speaking to the group on Sunday, October 16, Bishop W. Angie Smith, resident Bishop of the Oklahoma-New Mexico Area and Chairman of the General Board of Evangelism, declared that the United States is in the midst of a religious awakening that has great potential for a genuine nation-wide revival. Evidence of this religious awakening, cited by Bishop Smith, included marked increase in church and Sunday school attendance, the number of people joining churches on profession of faith, the continuing upswing in new church buildings and facilities, greater interest and participation in church camps, Bible schools, and weekday programs of local churches, and record highs in the financial support of mis-

Daily platform speaker for the meeting, Robert B. Pierce, pastor, Broadway Methodist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, challenges the group to "make our people understand the Christian way of life is a full-time, daily task."



George A. Fallon, pastor, Lakewood Methodist Church, Cleveland, Ohio, describes the spiritual impact of *The Upper Room* during one of the sessions of the Conference. Dr. Fallon was later elected president of the Council of Evangelism.

J. W. Golden, of the staff of the General Board of Evangelism, presents an evangelistic message to the Conference.



One of the highlights of the Conference is a concert of sacred music brought by a combined Indian choir. Jack Redbird directs the choir from Angie Smith Memorial Methodist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Robert Tecumseh, the choir from Witt Memorial Methodist Church, Tulsa.

sions, religious education, social welfare, and other work of the Church.

Principal Concerns

Arousing indifferent church members and reaching the unchurched were among the principal concerns of the group in discussing evangelistic ways and means.

"Evangelism is more than a mission or a method; it involves a contagious, conquering mood and the kindling of religious fires," said Earl N. Dorff, pastor of the Oklahoma City First Methodist Church.

"Our big job these days," Dr. Dorff said, "is to make people aware of their need for God, especially those who are full-fed with the things of this world."

Dr. Dorff added that "many churches are so dull, so docile, so dead, that the undertaker should be called at once."

In the field of mass evangelism, it was announced that the General Board of Evangelism will sponsor a "Mission to the Nation" in 1956. The Rev. Alan Walker, forceful Australian evangelist who has just concluded a highly successful mission throughout his own country, will be the visiting preacher. The Mission, to be launched in June, will feature a series of eight-day meetings in public auditoriums of eight principal cities yet to be selected.

Emphasizing that 69,000,000 persons in the United States—40 per cent of the population—do not belong to any church, Harry L. Williams, Director of the Mission, described it as "an intensive evangelistic thrust by Methodist churches to seek, witness, win, and establish the unreached."

The "Christmas for Christ emphasis; the World Wide Church Attendance Movement, January through Easter; The Christian Witness Mission; and the Prayer Life Movement were stressed in the meeting as vital factors in the Christianizing of the United States. Personal evangelism was emphasized.

Seek Recruits

Daily platform speaker for the meeting was Robert B. Pierce, pastor, Broadway Methodist Church, Indianapolis, Indiana. Among other things,

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Top, the opening session of the meeting of Conference and District Secretaries of Evangelism at Stillwater.

Center, Joseph D. Blinco, of London, England, chats with George H. Jones (left) and Harry Williams (right) following Dr. Blinco's address to the secretaries.

Bottom, participants in the Youth Evangelism Emphasis discuss phases of the work in connection with the youth report to the Conference.

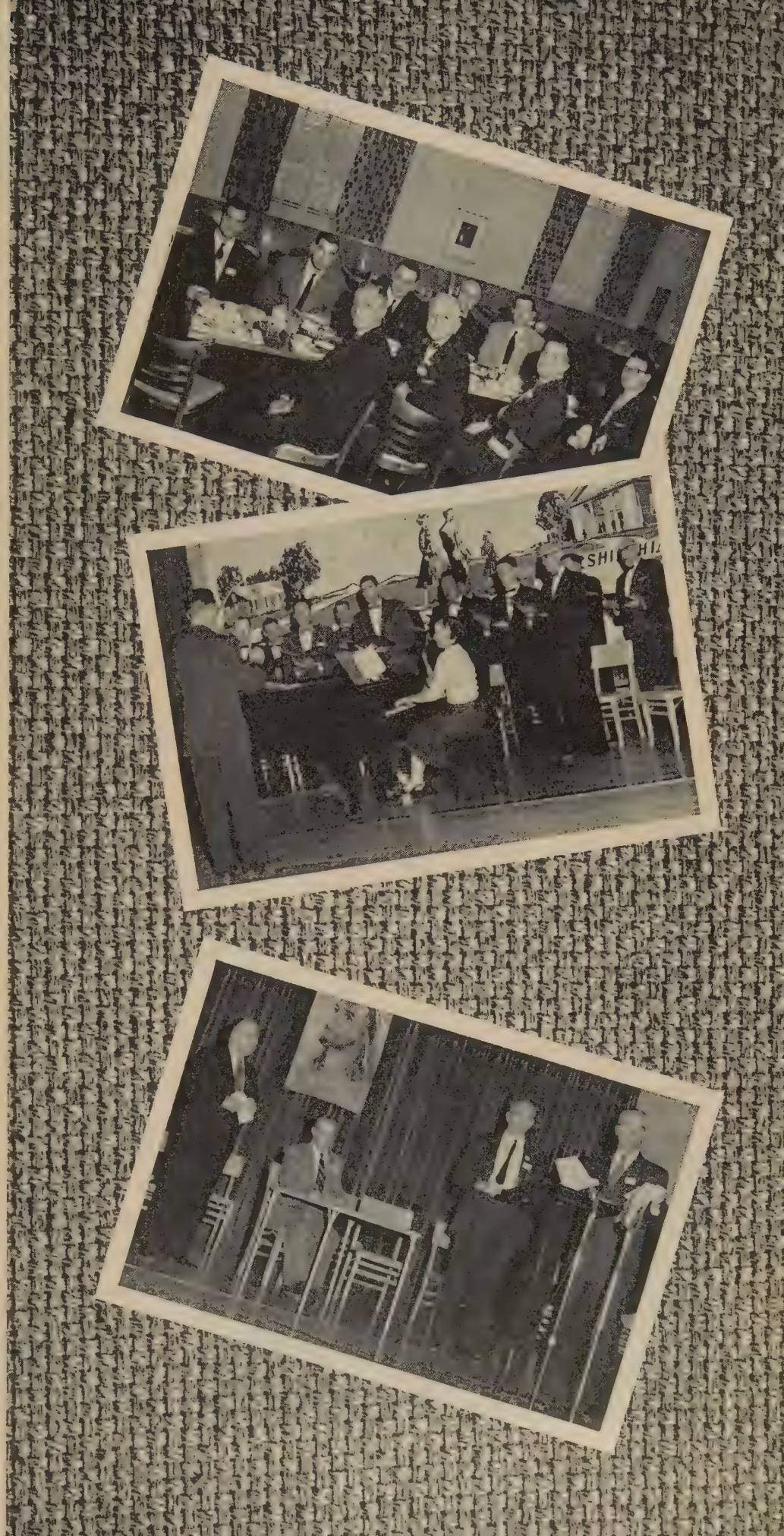
Dr. Pierce told the group, "The Church needs to seek recruits, not customers. We must erase the barrier between laymen and ministers—every real Christian is a minister of Christ—and make our people understand that the Christian way of life is a full-time, daily task."

Another thrilling address was delivered at the meeting by Dr. Joseph D. Blinco, of London, England. "Lost and unsaved man," Dr. Blinco said, "is the object of our evangelism; and to view him any other way is to blunt our passion, lose our vision, and kill our imperative."

Other Speakers

Others participating on the program were Newton Moats, speaking for the Prayer Life Movement; Robert H. Bodine, speaking for the Church Attendance Movement; Wayne Lamb, Sidney McCaig, Roy Henwood, and Herbert Thompson, representing Local Church evangelism; George A. Fallon and Seth Pool, speaking for THE UPPER ROOM; Jerry Williamson, representing 70-E; Jerry Reynolds, John Clinton, W. Arnem Roberts, and Charles Frazier, testifying in behalf of youth evangelism; Charles Hildreth, speaking for "Four Nights for God"; E. C. Erny, speaking on "The Workshop in Evangelism for Young Preachers"; Edward Cooley, speaking on "District Evangelistic Missions"; James Grisham, speaking on "Christian Commandos"; Ralph Mohney, speaking on "Rural Revivals"; Milton Merrill, speaking on "Christmas for Christ"; Leslie Christie, speaking on the "Community Evangelistic Crusade"; Mahlon Young, speaking on the "Mission to Members"; and Emerson S. Colaw, Sumter M. Riley, Jr., James W. Marlin, Harold G. Crume, Virgil Mabry, Stanley Jeffry, Ernest Dugan, and Forest B. Oglesby, speaking on various phases of the Spiritual Life. Roy T. Henwood was chairman and Edgar A. Potts, secretary of the Findings Committee.

Among the actions taken at the meeting was the organization of the Council of Evangelism of The Methodist Church. This action is described in detail in the January issue of SHEPHERDS.



Top, participants in the Spiritual Life Evangelism effort meet for luncheon to discuss achievements in this area of Evangelism.

Center, the men's chorus from Tulsa, Oklahoma, brings a stirring message in song to the assembly.

Bottom, Roy T. Henwood, of Scranton, Pennsylvania (extreme right), brings the report of the Findings Committee to the meeting. Others shown are (left to right) Joseph H. Edge; Edgar A. Potts, secretary of the Committee; and Harry Denman.

PROGRESS AND NEW GOALS

In Evangelism in New England

Adapted from the Conference Board of Evangelism Report To the New England Southern Conference

In viewing the work of the Conference Board of Evangelism, we unitedly feel that healthy signs of an awakening are in evidence among us.

In many of our churches the Commission on Membership and Evangelism has been active in the promotion of visitation evangelism, Fishermen's Clubs, the use of daily devotions, a program of grace at meals, the establishing of prayer groups, and the emphasis on church attendance.

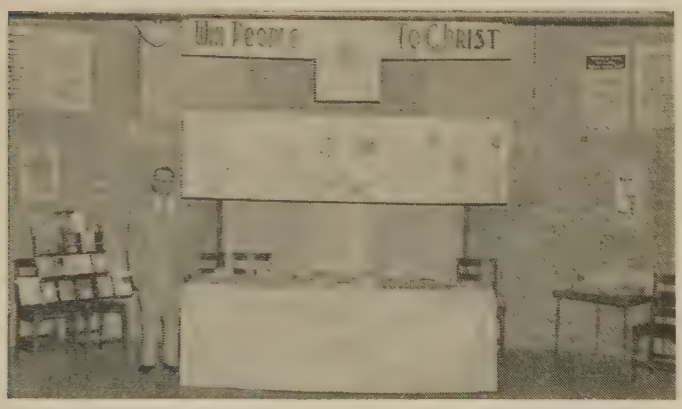
We believe that this has been due, not to anything that has been especially promoted this year, but to a program that has been growing through the years. We believe that we are now reaping the benefits of some of the labor spent in this field. This is especially true with reference to the Group Quarterly Conferences started in 1952 and the emphasis which the General Board has placed upon evangelism over the past years.

Prayer Vigils

Prayer Vigils have been of outstanding value. The churches that have participated in this means of prayer report blessing and inspiration far beyond their expectation. We trust that, as a result, prayer groups will be established in all our churches.

During the Conference Year a number of our churches have engaged in special evangelistic endeavors with outstanding results. Others have signified their desire to do so during the coming year. The District Secretaries of Evangelism have been busy in acquainting the pastors with the need and, in a number of instances, have been busy in strengthening the local churches in periods of preaching and visitation. Time has also been given to surveying the need for new churches in growing areas.

New England Southern Conference Board of Evangelism Display at the seat of the Annual Conference, held at South Methodist Church, Manchester, Connecticut, featured, among other items, the *Tidings* chart, "Spiritual Life for Methodist Christians."



The president of the Conference Board and the Conference Secretary of Evangelism have assisted in churches where requested to do so and have been active in promoting a program of evangelism in the Massachusetts Council of Churches.

We have noted that the use of evangelistic literature is on the increase. The Tract-of-the-Month Club has been especially helpful.

A. The Open Church . . . we urge

1. That our churches be open at all times for meditation and prayer.
2. That all our churches maintain at least one weekly service throughout the year, including the summer months.
3. That additional services be established in our churches wherever possible, that we may not surrender the Lord's Day to secular interests. The Sundays of Lent are a good time to begin if this is a new service in the church.

B. Nurture and Growth . . . we urge

1. That Spiritual Life Prayer Groups be established in each church.
2. That some method of contacting every member periodically, by church letter, visitation, telephone contact, or other method, be worked out in each church.
3. That the program, *Four Nights for God*, utilizing preaching or visitation evangelism or both, be included in the program of evangelism for each charge.
4. That a Fishermen's Club, or other plan of continuing visitation evangelism, be organized in each church.
5. That every church in the Conference receive at least one member during the ensuing year, with a goal of one new member for every 10 now on the roll.
6. That training classes be held for all persons joining the church.

Helpful Materials

C. Literature . . . we urge

1. That we seek to make effective use of the many excellent tracts available through TIDINGS and other sources.
2. That SHEPHERDS magazine be made available to each Chairman of the Local Church Commission on Membership and Evangelism by the local church and, where possible, to each member of the Commission.
3. That we recognize the great possibilities for developing personal and family devotions through the widespread use of THE UPPER ROOM. That consideration be given to the Parish Cultivation Plan, whereby each issue is mailed to members of the church.

D. Ministers . . . we urge

1. That each pastor seek to visit in each home in his parish during the Conference year.
2. That our ministers unite in praying for each other and for the work in our churches on each Thursday.
3. That each minister attend the Pastor's Assembly.
4. That each pastor attend the Minister's pre-Lenten Retreat.

They Toiled in White Fields in 1955

by Leroy H. Walker

FOR the second summer "The Seventy Evangelists" — "70-E" — found the fields "white unto harvest." When they had assembled at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, June 20, 1955, for a week of training experience, it was discovered that they represented 17 theological schools, 27 states, Japan, England, Germany, and the Philippines. This they had in common: all 73 of them were seeking to answer the ministry of The Methodist Church, and all of them were seeking to answer the call of the Lord of the harvest to enter His white fields.

Amazing Results

There was no time for play during the brief period that they were at Lake Junaluska. Every man applied himself with utmost diligence, and each accepted his assignment for the summer without complaint. Under the direction of the General Board of Evangelism, they served for 10 weeks in 30 states and Alaska.

Each man sent a weekly report of his activity to the office at Nashville. When these reports were tabulated, it was revealed that the 70-E had preached 1,380 times to a combined congregation of 76,430. Under their direction 93,590 persons were contacted by survey to disclose 14,148 Methodist prospects. Spiritual life covenants were recorded by 682 persons, while 595 registered commitments on profession and vows and 363 indicated desire for transfer, for a total of 958 individual pledges of faith.

The 70-E did survey work, directed Visitation Evangelism, conducted Christian Witness Missions for the youth, led Spiritual Life Missions, provided a leadership for vacation church schools. They held summer revivals, did personal counseling, led singing, organized choirs, and assisted pastors and District Superintendents in various ways.

The 70-E worked in trailer cities, in depressed areas of great cities, in isolated rural and mountain communities, in county seat towns, and in villages.

In the summer of 1954, the 70-E took individual assignments. In the summer of 1955, many of them served alone, or with one or two partners. But a "crew," varying from 18 to 26 of the 70-E and the staff director, traveled together in a chartered bus and served Districts in North Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Texas, and Nebraska.

Herman Luetzow, Superintendent of the St. Louis District, rallied all his District agencies behind a program to start a new church in Concord Village. With the help of a 70-E, in a matter of weeks a new church was started in a renovated dance hall; and two other buildings were fitted up as a parsonage and as Christian education quarters.

The New Churches Organized

At the close of the summer, Bishop Ivan Lee Holt instituted the new church and received 100 charter members. The District Superintendent held the first Quarterly Conference. The new church tried to persuade the 70-E to become its regular pastor. When he could not be dissuaded from his plan to become a chaplain, the church gladly accepted another pastor to carry on the work that had been so well begun.

In Evansdale, Iowa, a 70-E was instrumental in starting a new Methodist church with a charter membership of 66. A choir was trained and directed, the youth group was organized, and the church school was organized and fully manned. A full-time pastor was appointed to carry on this work.

In Omaha, Nebraska, the crew did

An abandoned ranch house provides a meeting place for a vacation church school in the Lemhi Valley, Idaho.

One of the 70-E poses with the people he served in front of the Moose Pass Methodist Church, Alaska.

extensive survey work and helped the District Superintendent to start a new church in southwest Omaha with 78 charter members.

Two of the 70-E helped the pastor who had been appointed to start a new church at Searcy, Arkansas. They helped him fix up a temporary building to house the new group, and the two young men held a revival in that temporary structure.

Two of the 70-E worked with our Board of Missions in Alaska. They looked after a group of small churches, gathered the children together in classes, and at Kenai they found 258 prospects for a new Methodist church that the local leadership will proceed to organize.

In the tri-city area near Rock Island, Illinois, one 70-E helped with a survey that located 500 Methodist prospects. The Illinois Conference Board of Evangelism is following this up and expects to have a new church under way in this open field.

One 70-E, who is a Japanese student, spent the summer working with the Japanese colony in Worland, Wyoming. He had outstanding success in interesting his fellow-Japanese in attending and uniting with our Worland church.

Unusual Situations

Among other unusual situations where the 70-E were of great help was the Piketon Atomic Area in Ohio. The 70-E who served there worked with trailer-home families, who have few permanent ties, but who experience the same need for the Church that more settled families have.

Another unique assignment was to survey the families in a government resettlement project in Idaho. The Minidoka Pumping Project there is providing new homes for hundreds of families in what had always been a sagebrush desert. In the same state another 70-E worked in isolated mountain valleys in the shadow of the Continental Divide. He worked with children and youth and sought to tie their interest into the work of the Salmon Larger Parish.

Liberal and loyal friends made possible the launching of the program of "The Seventy Evangelists." In its second summer, it was again made possible by loyal friends who gave varying sums. It is not yet self-supporting; and, as plans are made for the summer of 1956, the General Board of Evangelism is confident that hundreds of loyal Christians will welcome a chance to invest in God's harvesters, remembering that "the laborer is worthy of his hire."

Dates for the 1956 program are June 6 to August 26. So successful was the work of the crew that plans are being developed to make more extended use of this type of ministry. It is hoped that assignments can be found to keep three crews busy during this third summer of the program of "The Seventy Evangelists—70-E."

For further information concerning this significant program, write to Harry L. Williams, Director, "The Seventy Evangelists," 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

Members of a daily vacation church school class and workers show appreciation for the work of the 70-E.

A 70-E conducts worship services for the congregation of a new church which he helped to organize.

Australian Evangelist Is in Great Demand

THE Reverend Alan Walker, Methodism's successful Australian evangelist, is already proving to be in great demand in The Methodist Church in the United States for the year 1956 and the first part of the year 1957. As a guest of the General Board of Evangelism, Mr. Walker already has the major portion of 26 weeks spoken for. Other engagements are yet to be made.

A Mission to the Nation

As full-time director of the Methodist evangelistic program in Australia, "Mission to the Nation," Mr. Walker was awarded the "Order of the British Empire" by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, in recognition of his outstanding spiritual leadership. A broad experience of special youth work, pastoral work, and world-wide travel has enabled Mr. Walker to formulate an evangelistic appeal suited especially for this day.

Using the methods of preaching and writing, and taking the program into the field of radio, Australia's "Mission to the Nation" has been one of the most successful evangelistic programs in the history of Methodism there.

Coming to the United States the latter part of January, 1956, the Walker family will settle in Nashville. The evangelist will find a full schedule of activities awaiting him.

His schedule already includes The Methodist World Council, General Conference, and a Jurisdictional and four Annual Conferences. Five schools and seminaries have asked for him. Ten communities or churches are in the itinerary, including such engagements as weeks at the Chicago Temple during Lent and the Lakeside Assembly in Ohio. Several local churches have invited him for special occasions.

Opportunity will be given Mr. Walker to contact the heart of Methodism, as he is the Sunday preacher the first Sunday of General Conference. He also speaks the following week during the Conference's "Hour of Evangelism."

Successful Plan

Still in the planning stages is a series of eight-day evangelistic missions following the plan used so successfully in Australia. These missions will be under the direction of Harry L. Williams and the staff of the Department of Evangelistic Missions of the General Board. Seven such weeks are planned, with three of them definitely scheduled.

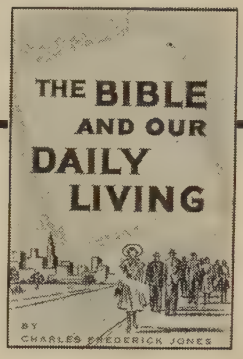
Joseph H. Edge, of the General Board of Evangelism staff, announces that a number of open dates for two- or three-day engagements are available after the first of July, 1956. Information concerning such dates can be secured by writing to Dr. Edge, at 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

The General Board of Evangelism looks forward with great anticipation to this visit by Mr. Walker. Under his leadership during the year, every effort will be made to achieve a new advance for Christ and His Church.

A Helpful Book
for
Every Layman

The Bible and Our Daily Living

by Charles F. Jones



An inspiring application of Bible truths to everyday living. A book to which laymen will turn again and again.

Order in Quantities

50c each

12 or more, 35c each

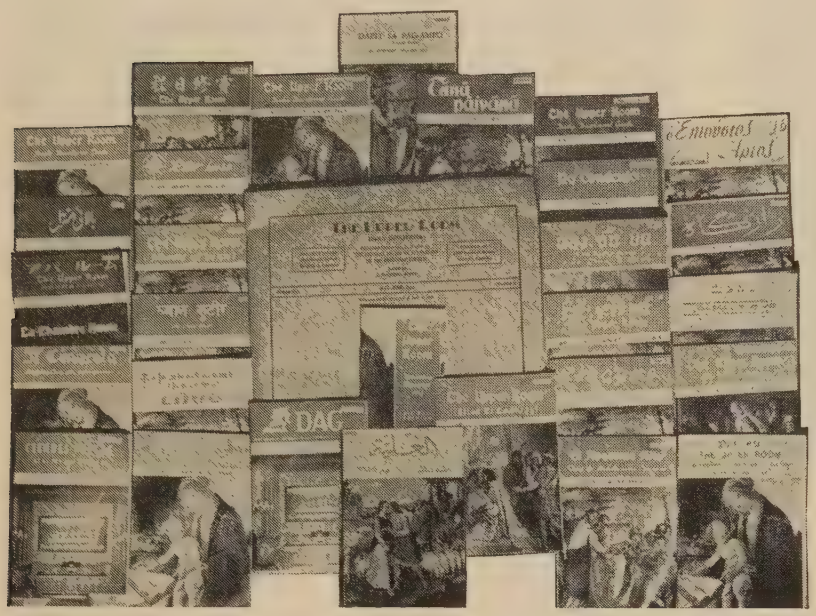
(See Order Blank)

TIDINGS

Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials

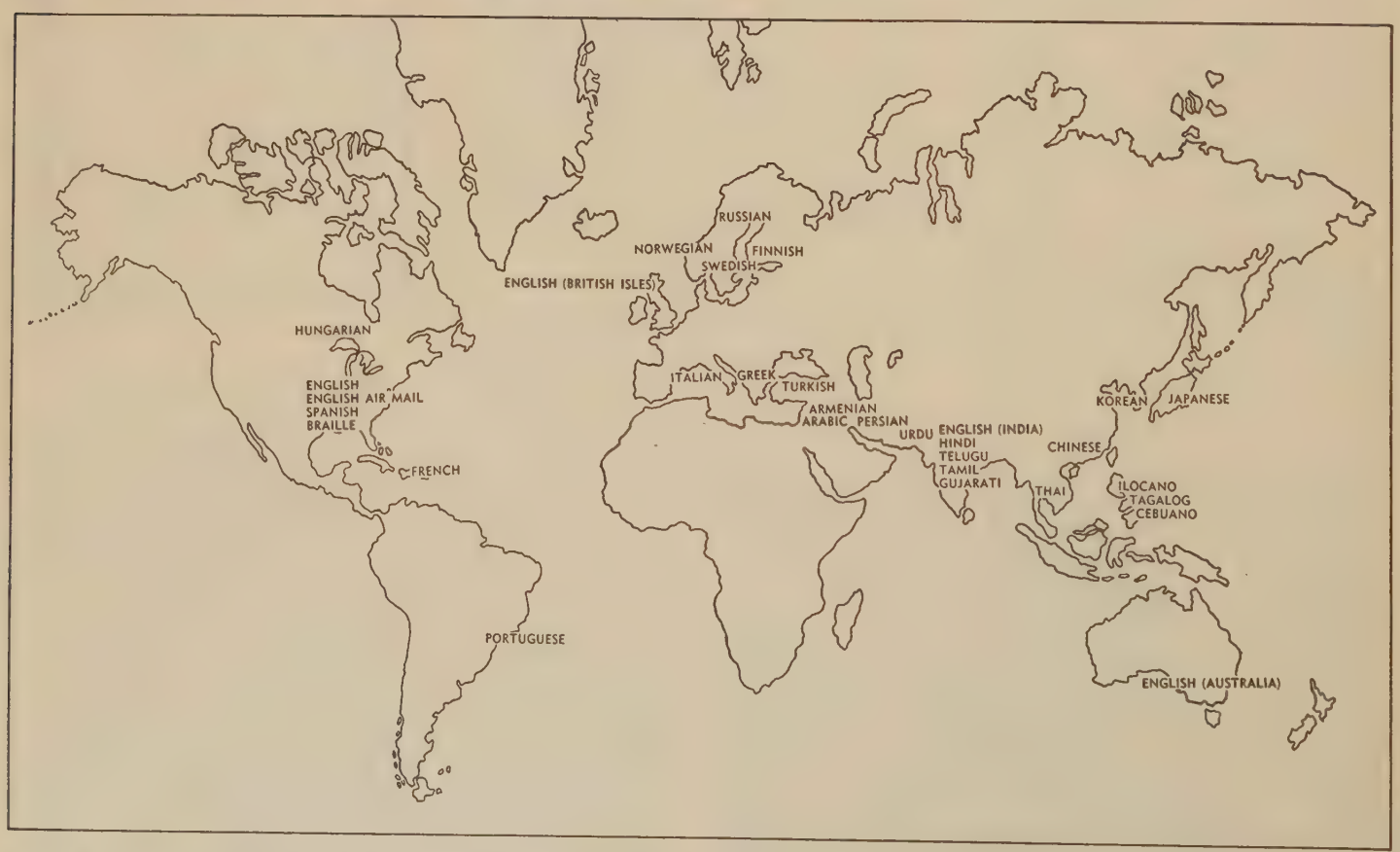
1908 Grand Ave.
Nashville 5, Tenn.

Foreign Language Editions Give World Wide Scope to Ohio Church



The shut-ins of Pioneer and Alvordton, Ohio, had the pleasure of seeing The Upper Room Foreign Language Editions Exhibit, thanks to their pastor, Donald J. Morgan. This colorful exhibit, which is loaned free of charge upon request, was used extensively by the churches and church school teachers. Then it was taken to the homes of the shut-ins and left with each for a day or two.

The minister writes, "The display helped to give the people a realization of the world-wide scope of the Christian religion and worship. It was a helpful addition to the World Wide Communion Sunday emphasis. Thank you for the work you are doing providing THE UPPER ROOM for people all over the world, and for the helpful display that you loaned to our people."



A map showing where the 32 editions of *The Upper Room* are printed. This includes 27 languages and English Braille. It is interdenominational, international, interracial, and the world's most widely used devotional guide.

Niemoller Challenges Christian Nations

THE blame for the unrest of underdeveloped nations should be placed at the door of so-called Christian nations of Europe, Dr. Martin Niemöller, German church leader, declared, speaking at The Upper Room Chapel.

A large audience heard Pastor Niemöller predict growing unrest in these underdeveloped countries which will create the next great crisis in world affairs, as he called on the Christian nations to do something real to meet this threat.

Dr. Niemöller discounted Communist responsibility for the world condition, pointing out "Communism can't be blamed—it is too young. But the so-called Christian nations of Europe have dominated world affairs for more than 300 years, and the result is one-half of the world is starving."

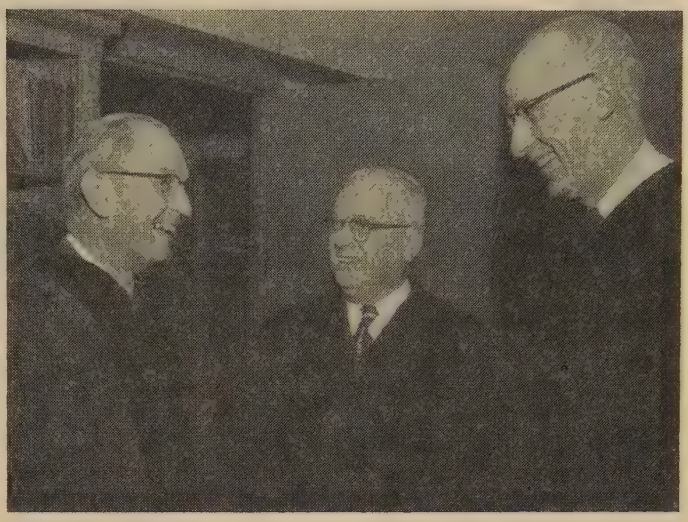
"Our situation is that of the dishonest steward in the 16th chapter of Luke. The Lord is calling for an account of our stewardship, but we have misused and abused the gift of the Lord, turning it to our own use and for our friends."

He described the unrest in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and explained that the world is ever shrinking as the population increases. Then he asked, "Will we have a second people's migration as 1,300 years ago when the barbarians overran Europe? Will we offer them a heritage, or will they have to take it?"

The solution is in the Gospel, Pastor Niemöller answered. "We preach 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be children of God' and 'Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.' Will we follow that promise?"

President of the Evangelical Church in Hesse-Nassau, Germany, he served in the German Navy during World War I as a submarine commander, and began his theological studies following the war, becoming a pastor in 1924.

Pastor Niemöller broke with Hitler when the Nazis began taking over the German Church, and as a result was a prisoner from 1937 to 1945.



Dr. Martin Niemoller, left, guest speaker at The Upper Room Chapel, is shown with Dr. J. Manning Potts, editor of *The Upper Room*, and Dr. Leon M. Adkins, Executive Secretary, Local Church Division of the Methodist Board of Education.

Pastors Recommend Use of Parish Plan

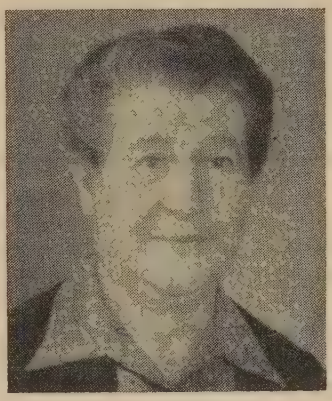
In the bulletin of the Fifth Street Methodist Church in Steubenville, Ohio, the pastor, Charles Dailey, wrote an open letter which began:

"Dear Friends,

"Few of us spend the time we should in Bible study and prayer. Our lives are poorer because of our neglect to do so. We do better when we have some means of help. THE UPPER ROOM is designed to help us more easily establish the habit of personal and family daily devotions. It is a devotional guide with a meditation for each day. Using it each day will add greatly to our understanding of the Christian faith and definitely deepen our devotional life.

"That is why the 'Parish Cultivation Plan' is being adopted for its distribution in our church. It is our hope that every family of our membership receiving a copy will use it each day. Remember as you use it the other families of our church who are joining with you."

For information concerning the Parish Cultivation Plan write THE UPPER ROOM, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.



Deaconess Louisa Blanco de Trey
Cadiz, Spain

"In September our Superintendent visited us and administered the Holy Communion. I used the occasion to distribute EL APOSENTO ALTO. It was a joyful surprise," writes Deaconess Louisa Blanco de Trey from the Mission of Redeemer's Church in Cadiz, Spain.

She and the members of this church, where she has served since 1923, expressed gratitude not only for the copies of THE UPPER ROOM which are "such daily manna, but also for the intercession offered in our behalf by the Fellowship." The bond of loving fellowship is a very real thing to these Christian friends in Spain. The copies of EL APOSENTO ALTO and other devotional literature sent to them are the tangible evidences of the spirit which ties them in this world circle.

The protestant Summer Camp is a project which the Mission has carried on with great success. The camps make it possible for the underprivileged to enjoy the beautiful beaches of Spain. Deaconess Blanco de Trey writes of her joy in the distributing to the campers the devotional literature that has been made possible by donors to the Fellowship.

Users of THE UPPER ROOM long to share this devotional guide. Many have joined The Fellowship, sending THE UPPER ROOM to those who do not know it; to those in other countries who, because of exchange controls, could not subscribe; Braille issues to individuals and to homes for the blind where no funds are available. It has been rewarding to the donors as well as to the recipients. The ministry of Fellowship includes Personal, Chaplains, Braille, Other Languages, and Specials. Anyone may join The Upper Room Fellowship, by writing to Miss Mattie Lee Chatham, director, 1908 Grand Avenue, Nashville 5, Tennessee.

Evangelism

IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Fire Fails to Halt Visitation Campaign

NOTABLE success was achieved in Visitation Evangelism in Travis Park Church in a three-day campaign, October 31 to November 2, when over one hundred volunteer workers met in the Small Auditorium for supper, inspiration, and instruction and afterward for visitation of prospects for membership. Members from all departments of the church met the challenge of the pastor, Kenneth W. Copeland, "Full speed ahead in all phases of our church program," by going out each of the appointed nights, as had been planned for many weeks, with earnest minds and praying hearts, visiting several hundred families having one or more prospects for membership and inviting them to "Come with us to Christ and His Church" at Travis Park.

The immediate fine result was obtaining 42 commitments, signing up to join the church the next Sunday, or the first Sunday practicable. In addition to these persons, two others came into the Church at the same time in response to the invitation of the pastor and the inspiration and appeal of seeing others who came because they had already committed themselves to come.

A new spirit of earnestness and joy was plainly evident in faces and in conversations of the visitors as they made their reports. The visitors, in so many instances, did not stop visiting at the end of the campaign, but have continued to bring in new commitments and are asking for more prospects to visit. It was thrilling to share with these 115 workers their experience of victory in winning new people to Christ and a deeper interest in the Church. Knowing this kind of joy and zeal for new members, it is believed by those who won people to Christ in this campaign, will mean a future Travis Park Church greater than can be measured now. "Suppose," some of the workers said, "this zeal should catch fire in the hearts of every one of our members. What if several hundred members of Travis Park should say, as is being said by many hundreds of members in other Methodist churches in America today, 'I will go all out to win at least one new member to Christ and His Church this Conference year. Think what that would mean to Travis Park Church!' "

Well-Rounded Program Brings Church Growth

by Frank K. Suddath, Pastor
St. Paul's Methodist Church
Fort Worth, Texas

IN a recent evaluation of the Fort Worth Methodist churches, Dr. Harold Staats, of Denver University, had this to say about St. Paul's: "Any church that doubles its membership in four years' time is certainly making progress."

This is a reality; and it became one, not by wishing, but by working together with faith and consecration.

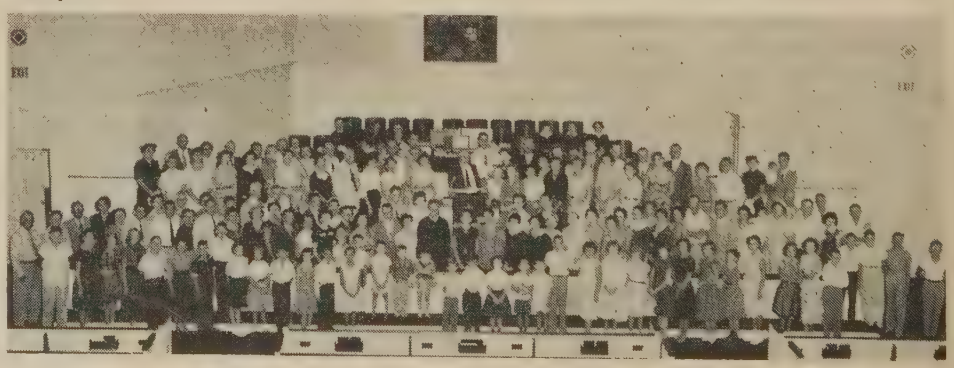
Our program of evangelism is a working program of educational, visitation, personal, youth, and mass evangelism.

All our organized adult classes have a weekly visitation program, and all new prospects are visited and invited to the activities of the church. Classes are held twice a year by the pastor for the training in membership of the children of the church school. These classes are held during Holy Week and during special revival services.

We assist our older youth in promoting and carrying out the program of a Youth Revival, and our Commission on Membership and Evangelism plans the revival for the entire membership. Last year we had Ray Neill Johnson, of Abilene, Texas, to hold our church-wide revival. It was a time to be remembered for re-dedication and the admission of new members.

St. Paul's has the special advantage of being in a very fast growing section of our city. But growth of a city alone does not always insure growing churches. Our motto, "With Faith We Build Together," lies at the root of a doubled membership, with three times the amount of contributions that have enabled us to expand our original facilities and to build and furnish a new sanctuary with a seating capacity of 750.

A portion of the new members who have united with St. Paul's Methodist Church during the last three years.



Yes

WE HAVE AN FBI

Belzoni Methodist Church, Belzoni, Mississippi.

by Sarah Agnew
First Methodist Church, Belzoni, Mississippi

An FBI will work in Methodism. In the field of evangelism it can mean—*Find them—Bring them—Include them.*

This is the amazing story of such a project that has been accomplished by the Belzoni Methodist Church in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. This story has come to life in a town where the population remains consistently static—a few moving in to help support the work of the plantation system which is prevalent throughout the area, and a few leaving to engage in other industries in distant cities.

It has its beginning in a dream of its young evangelistic minister, the Reverend John M. McCay, as he and his wife toured the Holy Land in the spring of 1954. He walked along the sea of Galilee and recalled that the Master walked there one day when He called Peter and Andrew and said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He followed the trail the Master took to the mountainside where He taught His disciples the "Sermon on the Mount"; to the tumbled-down ruins of the synagogue at Capernaum where He preached to the multitudes; along the seashore to the site of Peter's home where the Master healed Peter's mother-in-law. He followed the path the Master took to Pilate's judgment hall and on to the site of the Cross on the little hill of Calvary outside the city wall of Jerusalem. From there he went to the Garden Tomb at the foot of Calvary where Christ's body was laid to await the Resurrection.

He followed the footsteps of Paul along the Damascus way through the Eastern Gate into the city of Damascus. He remembered these words of Peter: "Then they that gladly received His word were baptized: And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." (Acts 2:41, 47.)

Covenant

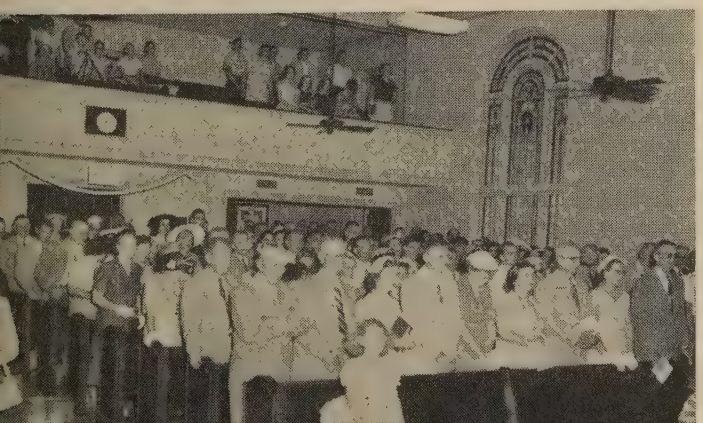
Spurred by a new enthusiasm and devotion to serve the Master more effectively, Mr. McCay, upon his return to the Belzoni Church, made this covenant with his Lord, "Beginning June 1, I will win at least one person to the Church each week for the Conference year."

As the new year opened, he took stock of his church. There were 437 members on the roll. Through a survey of the town, 43 prospects who should unite with the church were listed. The Commission on Membership and Evangelism was organized into a working force, and a goal of 100 new members was set for the Conference year. Church visitation teams were selected, and visitation for prospective members set up at regular intervals. The FBI was ready to begin its work.

The first few weeks moved along with good results, due largely to the enthusiasm and work of the pastor. As the weeks began to pile up—six, seven, eight—the Commission members and the visitation teams began to pick up interest. It could work! It was working! This was a program that must go on!

The summer months moved into fall. New interest began to creep into the entire membership. Someone would meet Mr. McCay on the street with this question, "Have you gotten a member this week?" He might reply, "No, we haven't, but the week is not over." Then,

At left, part of the congregation at worship during a Sunday morning service at the Belzoni Methodist Church. At right, Bishop Marvin A. Franklin preaches on Homecoming Sunday, May 29, 1955. Seated on rostrum, left to right, are James R. Grisham, Executive Secretary of the Conference Board of Evangelism; A. Y. Brown, District Superintendent; and John M. McCay, pastor.



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this would come from the questioner, "A new family has moved in on Church Street. They are all Methodists. Would you like for me to pick you up tonight and visit them?" When Sunday came, this family united with the church. The FBI was working as it should. The entire church was on the alert.

Revivals

Four revivals during the year strenthened the membership for this great program. During the month of July, Thomas A. Carruth, director of Methodism's Prayer Life Movement, led the church in a week's Prayer Revival. Seventeen prayer cells were set up with five members each—a total of eighty-five people praying for definite things to happen in the life of the Church. In October, Dr. Clovis Chappell preached in a Reaching Revival. The membership was strengthened in its spiritual experience, and several new members were added to the roll. The Reverend Ed DeWeese, a young energetic minister of the Mississippi Conference, preached a week on the Holy Habits of a Christian during a District-wide Spiritual Life Mission. This quickened the consciences of the membership to serve more diligently for the promotion of the FBI. During Holy Week, the Reverend James R. Grisham, North Mississippi Conference Secretary of Evangelism, came for a Witnessing Revival. Church visitation and preaching toward the winning of souls for the Kingdom of God was stressed. All these efforts were stimulating toward the work the church had undertaken.

At times during the year it looked as though the program was halted. But each time the pastor would remind those who were tempted to give up, "You, plus God, can do anything."

On the twenty-second Sunday it looked as if the program were over. The teams had visited, the pastor had talked to a number of people, everyone had worked, but nobody had responded. As the people shook hands with the minister and moved out of the church one lady paused, "Preacher, I felt that I should have moved forward during the invitation. Put my name on the roll. I want to be the new member this week." This lady knew what the church could mean to her. Only a short time before, her only son had been killed in a plane crash, and the ministry of the church had surrounded her and her husband with love and concern.

Another time the week had passed, the Sunday morning service was over, and no one had responded to the invitation. At the close of the service Mr. McCay asked the prayer cells to meet him at the altar. In the prayer meeting that followed, God was asked to lead one of the prayer warriors to some soul to win during the afternoon visitation. At the evening service, during the invitation, the new member came forward. How meaningful was the theme song the congregation sang, "Keep On Believing, God Will Answer Prayer."

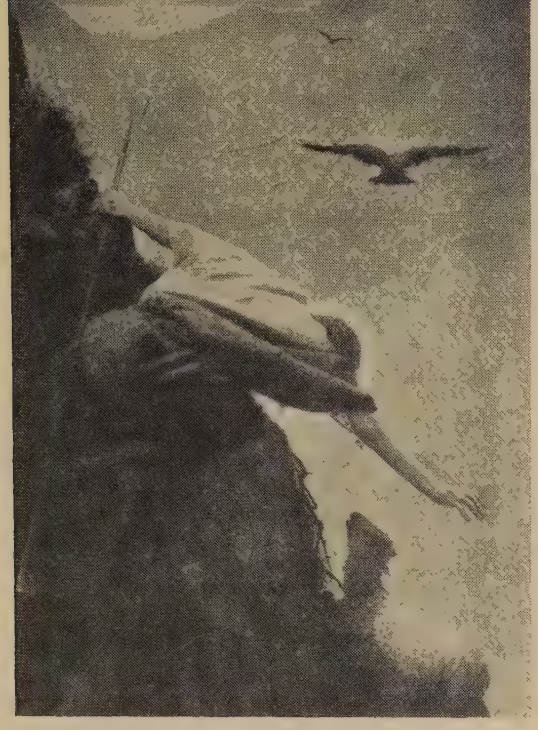
When the Conference year was over the goal of 100 new members had been exceeded—122 people had come into the fellowship of the church. Out of these 122 have come church school teachers, class leaders, a choir director, choir members, a church artist, a church photographer, and a number of prayer warriors.

Record

Having completed this record for the year, there was a Victory Day Celebration on May 29, 1954, at which time the eyes of the Southeastern Jurisdiction and the nation were turned toward a little Methodist church in the heart of the Mississippi Delta. Bishop Marvin A. Franklin of the Jackson Area was there to speak. Dr. Mary Welch, one of the founders of the great Prayer Movement, was there to speak. Dr. Harry Denman was there to commend the church for its splendid work in the field of winning souls for the Kingdom. Messages were read from a number of Bishops of our country. The Governor of the state of Mississippi sent his congratulations. President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent this message to the church from the White House: "My greetings to the members of the Methodist Church of Belzoni as you observe the completion of a year in which someone every Sunday has united with your church. To all of you I send my congratulations on this achievement and my hope that the members of your church will long continue to demonstrate to others their willingness to live up to the principles of their faith."

After the Conference year was over, the pastor and the Commission on Membership and Evangelism, led by Ross Young, decided this program must go on. As this article is being written, the church has passed the eighty-second consecutive Sunday of winning one or more people for the Kingdom. Not since Sunday, May 30, 1954, have they failed; and, with God's help, the program will go on.

The FBI is working. This church is *Finding them, Bringing them,* and *Including them,* in its total program. If it has worked in one church, it can work in any church if the "people have a mind to work."



by

George J. Creswell

Pastor, Second Methodist Church

Knoxville, Tennessee

WINNING A MULTITUDE—ONE BY ONE

SEEING multitudes of people who need a Saviour, I am filled with compassion for hundreds of persons who are on my prayer list.

Early in life, as my father traveled over the hills of East Tennessee and North Carolina seeking to win people to Christ by the roadside, in their homes, and in rural churches, I sensed his great concern for souls. In early youth, soon after my father's death, I caught from my mother, from the pastors of our little home church, and from other older Christians a sense of the value of a definite concern for a particular person. In one revival meeting, friends and the pastor had requested special prayer and special effort to win a neighbor who was not a Christian. From the day when I kneeled between the plow handles to pray for this man, who was converted in our next service, I have known the value and power of that definite concern.

In my experiences of soul winning across the years, I have learned the great worth of a special concern for definite persons. As I cultivate the interest of those on my prayer list, I watch eagerly for the hour when each person becomes God's. I give three examples of experiences I have had.

I

John was a clean, upright youth even though he had been reared in a family which took no interest in the Church. He married one of our young church women. Many times, when he was home on furlough, I sought to cultivate his interest. Soon after his wife and he returned to our city to make their home, I enlisted their interest in a new class which we were organizing for the youngest homemakers. (Winning him to attend church, I felt, was a vital step toward his becoming a Christian. I have discovered that one of the most effective means of reaching a person for Christ is to have him in the Christian fellowship.)

John's teacher reported that he seemed literally to drink in every word. I observed his interest as I preached. Gradually, John became more concerned about the Christian life.

One evening, as I visited in his home, John made his decision to be a Christian. Then he said, "I want to wait to join the church until our baby is old enough to be baptized."

On Christmas morning John and his wife dedicated their little daughter to God in Christian baptism. The following day, as I gave the invitation to people to give their hearts to Christ and join the Church, John, feeling a deep challenge to be a Christian father, came forward. He could scarcely wait for the last words of the invitation before he knelt at the font. He was the first adult to be baptized in our new sanctuary.

Now John is president of the new class and faithfully attends all the services. The genuineness of his experience is expressed in his great concern for others to be brought into the Christian fellowship which means so much to him.

II

Like John, Mike had spent his early years in a family that took no interest in the Church. As a child, he attended Sunday school occasionally. When Mike married Marie, who attended church regularly, he did not come. He had a physical handicap that made it difficult for him to provide adequately for his family. Due to this circumstance, as well as to increasing family responsibilities, Marie seldom attended. Soon there were several children in the home, and it became necessary for the young mother to work, even on Sunday, to help support the growing family. She became so discouraged that it proved difficult to keep the children in Sunday school.

Kay, the oldest daughter, attended the pastor's training class. She expressed great desire to give herself to Christ and unite with His Church. Surely, I thought, this is the hour when the young father will give his heart to the Lord and work with the mother to make a Christian home. But the efforts of Christian friends and pastor alike met no response.

Later the family moved to more de-

sirable housing, too distant for the children to walk to church. Bus transportation was not only inconvenient, but too costly. Friends with cars helped to bring the older children when they could attend; but, with the young mother working, their attendance was irregular.

A few years ago when the mother joined one of our young adult classes, the members sought to enlist the interest of the father. Two years ago, the oldest son, Charles, started to attend the membership training class and became so interested that not even a ball game could tempt him to stay away.

With the help of members of the young adult class, during the month of March Charles persuaded his father to come to Sunday school. During the "Four Nights for God" program, the teacher of the class visited this new man and brought back a report that Charles' father was more interested in becoming a Christian than he had ever been. After Palm Sunday, when Charles made his decision for Christ, I felt that the hour had arrived for the father to become a Christian.

On the Saturday before Easter, I wanted to visit many persons. I arose early and asked God to lead me to the persons I should see. While this father and mother and their five children were gathered around the breakfast table, I knocked at their door. The Holy Spirit had surely guided me and prepared the way for my coming. The father was not only at home, but was also eager to talk about becoming a Christian. The mother and children, including the toddler, left the breakfast table and came into the living room, where there was great rejoicing as the father gave his heart to Christ.

On Easter Sunday the oldest son and he united with the Church. How thrilling it is to see the father, the mother, and their five children walk through the portals of the church together! What a wonderful change is evident because many persons were concerned that these children have a Christian father!

III

A fine Christian mother and her family moved from the country to the city to live after the father of the home had died. Her daughter, Nellie—still in her teens—had a double sorrow. She had lost not only her father, but also her husband, who had recently died. Another daughter, Belle, had found life hard. With their meager earnings from working in the mill the sisters could provide little else than food and shelter.

Added to their sorrow and disappointments was their loneliness in the city. They listened to the people who told them that their clothes were not nice enough to wear to church in the city. Many months passed before Christian women from our church could persuade the mother to attend. Years passed before the girls, who had long ago broken their habit of church attendance, would come with her. Likewise, they would come to Sunday school only occasionally despite the earnest invitations of friends.

The mother became greatly interested and transferred her membership. She became one of our most devoted workers. Quietly she visited the unchurched, the sick, the shut-ins. In short, she helped in every way she could. How she prayed and longed for her daughters to share in that Christ-like ministry!

Death claimed Belle's husband. Yet, nothing seemed to move her to open her heart to Christ. Then one day the good mother was stricken. For weeks she was seriously ill. Never was she alone in the hospital because Nellie and Belle took turns by their mother's bedside. Touched by a loving heart, weakened by kindness, chords that were broken began to vibrate once more. The beauty of our Lord had shined in the life of their good mother. Her radiance, even amid disappointments and hardships, and her unselfish devotion to Christ and His Church had gripped their hearts. They recognized the triumph of a faithful Christian when death claimed their mother.

Nellie and Belle had a different outlook and interest after this experience. They expressed a desire to attend church regularly, as their mother had. I felt the hour had come to win them to Christ and the Church.

Late one afternoon I drove to their home. I found Belle ready to dedicate her life to Christ. She had just told me that she would like to join the Church when Nellie entered the room. I told her that Belle was ready to join the Church. With tears in her eyes, Nellie declared, "I will join, too."

On Easter Sunday they knelt side by side for baptism and were received into the Church which their mother had loved so dearly.

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FOUR NIGHTS FOR GOD

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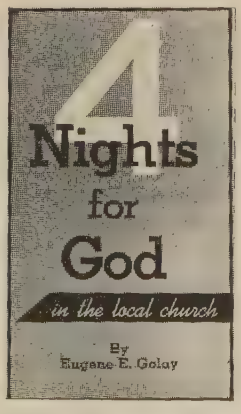

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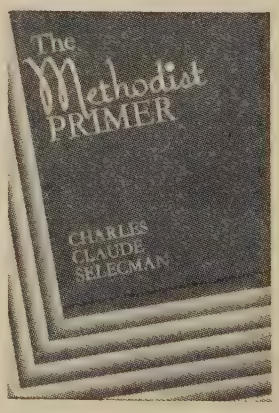

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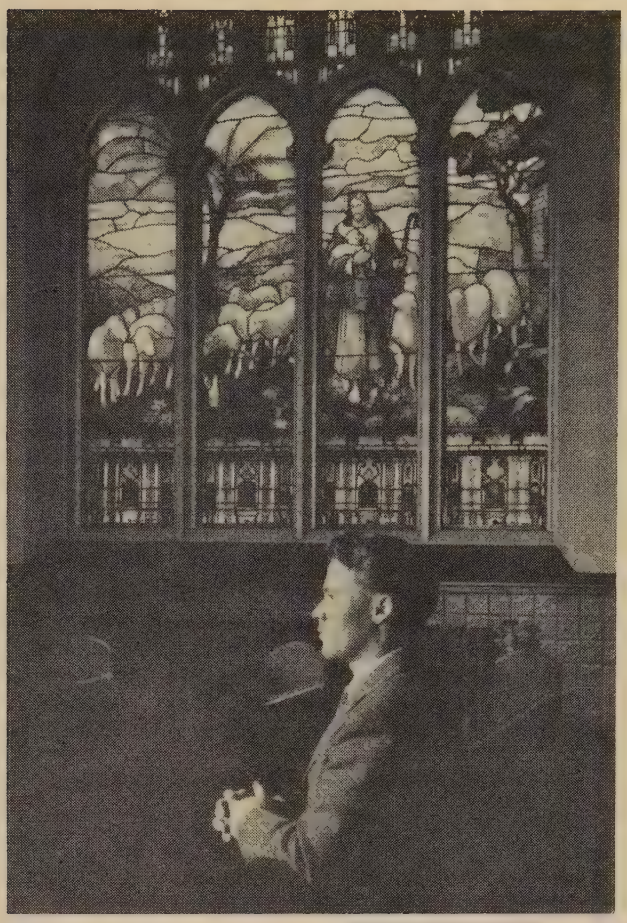
A Plain Man Prays

by

Joseph A. Fiske

Greene, New York



NOBODY is plainer than John Doe. He looks and acts like anybody else. He could live in your town. He could be your next door neighbor. Like most of us, he owns a serviceable car—and maybe a television set. He works eight hours every day. He enjoys his home and family. He bowls one night a week. He may be a Mason or an Elk or an Odd Fellow and probably belongs to a service club or two. He likes to spend his spare time tinkering around his home and garden.

Very likely, John Doe has had some kind of military experience. Consequently, he has a good deal of interest in his world. He reads the newspaper and the current magazines to keep posted on contemporary affairs. He is interested in whether tomorrow is likely to be peaceful or war-torn. He takes a genuine interest in politics, finding time to think and argue himself clear on the most pressing issues and exercising his right to vote.

John Doe's education has not been neglected. He can read intelligently, write a letter that carries meaning, and figure out his own finances. He accepts his education as part of the normal equipment of life and uses it automatically without thinking much about it.

To some extent, John Doe is religious, too. As a child, he was taken to Sunday school and church by his family. His grandfather was regarded as quite a pillar in the church. During the years of his adolescence, John Doe was greatly inspired and captivated by the magnificent idealism of the Christian faith. But for a while after high school, and before he had his own family, he didn't pay much attention to either church or religion. It didn't seem to mean much to him right then because he felt pretty capable of taking care of himself; and there was no one else to take care of.

True, a time or two in the war, he was glad to have his religious faith. He dusted it off, looked it over, and used it. For on all sides of him, men were dying. At any moment a shell or mortar fragment or shrapnel with his number on it might come by. He could not afford to take chances.

Settled Down

When he came home from the war, he married and settled down. Then the significance of religion seemed to fade again. Of course, he went to his minister to be married. As a matter of fact, he was married in the church, much against his wishes. And when Jackie Doe came, the proud parents immediately arranged for his baptism.

On those Sundays when the car wasn't working well enough for a drive in the country, or when the lawn didn't need mowing, or when the leaves didn't need raking, Mr. and Mrs. John Doe went to church. It always seemed pretty tame to John. The singing wasn't even as enthusiastic as the singing they had done in the army barracks. The prayers couldn't come within a country mile of being as realistic as his foxhole prayers.

And when it came to reading the Bible, he had heard Charles Laughton read it in a USO one time, and the minister couldn't hold a candle to that. John always went equipped with a pencil so that, in case of emergency, he could draw sketches on the bulletin should the sermon drag on interminably. But, in spite of all the drawbacks, he admitted that it always made him feel better to go to church, and he had a kind of guilty feeling when he didn't go.

After Jackie was born, John Doe began to realize that he had to be careful of the way he talked and watch some of the things he did around the house because the little fellow was quick to pick things up—and John Doe was no plaster saint. He sent Jackie to Sunday school when the boy was old enough to go. One Sunday Jackie said that he liked Sunday school all right, but he'd

be glad when he got big like his dad so he could stay home and read the funnies. But John Doe told him firmly that Sunday school was for kids and that it did Jackie good to go.

Gradually, John Doe realized that, when a man has a family, he can't ever be as self-sufficient as he was before. He really became aware of this one night when Jackie's cold suddenly flamed into a high fever. John wondered, in an anxious sort of way, what a man could do for his family in this situation. It seemed as if his hands were tied, and there was nothing he could do. At first, Jackie's illness was nothing serious, but it didn't respond to treatment the way it ought to. It was going to be a long pull, the doctor said. It was hard for Jackie, but it was even harder for John Doe and his wife, who had to wait and have patience and do all the little, monotonous things that had to be done. But they were in there together, they agreed, and they would see it through.

They kept on going to church. They had to take turns, of course, but even when only one of them had been at worship the day went better. They were more even-tempered. Things went so much more smoothly.

When John Doe went to church, he liked to go early, while the organ was playing and nothing much seemed to be happening. He had always seen people come in, sit down, and bow their heads to pray. He tried it. He was pretty rusty at praying, he discovered; but it wasn't as hard as he had thought.

An Experience

One Sunday he had the queerest kind of experience. As he was accustomed to do, he bowed his head and began to pray. As he did so, he had a distinct impression that someone had sat down next to him. He hadn't heard anybody enter the pew; and when he opened his eyes, nobody was there. But he couldn't shake off the feeling that somebody else had come in. While he prayed, the impression deepened that he was not alone. Then John Doe let come into his prayer all the things he had been afraid to think before. When he lifted his head, a great weight had gone.

That day everything the minister said seemed good to John Doe. The hymns were good, too. It was almost like coming in from work hungry and finding a hot meal on the table.

When John Doe went home, he found that he saw things differently. Jackie's coaxing for things he couldn't have didn't bother John anymore, and he didn't get upset over little things as he used to.

One day, when John's wife said something about his changed attitude, he told her about his prayer experience in church. She listened thoughtfully, said she had once heard the minister speak about family devotions. She felt they ought to try them. She wanted to see if all the family couldn't feel the extra person. So they tried it. And it happened.

John Doe and his family, by praying, had learned the reason for prayer.

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Headquarters for Evangelistic Materials

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Methodist Prayer Chain Movement Continues for Second Year in 1956

Throughout 1955 Methodist churches maintained a year-long prayer service that began New Year's Eve and extended all the way to December 31, 1955. The service was made possible as over 1,300 churches in all 48 states held 24-hour prayer vigils, from 6:00 o'clock one evening until 6:00 o'clock the next evening. Two or more of the volunteering churches were assigned to each day of the year so that, as churches completed the 24-hour service in one community, the service was continued in another.

The concern for the year-long prayer vigil became so great that 56 Annual Conferences of The Methodist Church have committed themselves to having similar programs within their own groups of churches throughout the year 1956.

The Conferences that have planned the continuous prayer chain cover 23 states completely and parts of 10 others. The Methodist Church in Cuba plans to have its own program in 1956, also.

Conferences Planning the 1956 Prayer Chain

1. Pacific Japanese Provisional
2. Kansas
3. Florida
4. Idaho
5. Louisiana
6. Memphis
7. Minnesota
8. Montana
9. New Mexico
10. Oklahoma
11. Oregon
12. Peninsula
13. Southern California-Arizona
14. Southwest (C)
15. Southwest Texas
16. Virginia
17. Missouri
18. Southwest Missouri
19. St. Louis
20. North Mississippi
21. Mississippi
22. Alabama
23. South Georgia
24. North Georgia
25. Rio Grande
26. Northwest Texas
27. Southwest Texas
28. North Texas
29. Texas (C)
30. Central Texas
31. Texas (SC)
32. Wyoming State
33. Little Rock
34. North Arkansas
35. New England Southern
36. Southern Illinois
37. Rock River
38. North Dakota
39. South Dakota
40. Detroit
41. Michigan
42. Central New York
43. Philadelphia
44. Central Kansas
45. Central Pennsylvania
46. Iowa-Des Moines
47. Northern New York
48. New York
49. Cuba
50. East Tennessee (C)
51. Central West
52. Illinois
53. West Wisconsin
54. Tennessee (C)
55. Holston
56. Tennessee (SE)

States Covered by Conferences

1. Arizona
2. Kansas
3. Florida
4. Idaho
5. Louisiana
6. Tennessee
7. Minnesota
8. Montana
9. New Mexico
10. Oklahoma
11. Oregon
12. Texas
13. Virginia
14. Missouri
15. Mississippi
16. Georgia
17. Rhode Island
18. Wyoming
19. Arkansas
20. Illinois
21. North Dakota
22. South Dakota
23. Michigan

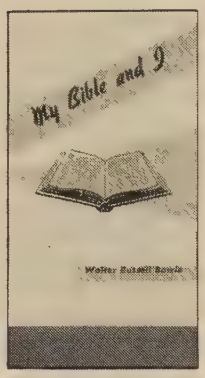
States Covered in Part

1. California
2. Delaware
3. Maryland
4. Alabama
5. Connecticut
6. New York
7. Pennsylvania
8. Iowa
9. Wisconsin
10. Colorado

Other Countries

Cuba

For Lent
and Holy Week



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Winners of the Tract-of-the-Month CONTEST

In the June-July, 1955, issue of SHEPHERDS, the TIDINGS Tract-of-the-Month Club announced its first contest for tract writers. The purpose of this contest was to foster the writing of better tracts and to get insights concerning the kinds of tracts that are most needed.

The contest was open to any person interested in the promotion of the Christian gospel through the written word.

Manuscripts were received from all parts of the United States. Needless to say, these manuscripts were varied, interesting, and helpful; they covered a very broad field of thinking and inspirational depth.

Great interest was shown in the contest by the ministers; more manuscripts were sent in by ministers than laymen. This is, perhaps, as it should be; nevertheless, the competition was restricted to the fields of ministers and laymen separately.

Here are the decisions of the judges:

Ministers

"The Hitch-Hiker" — $35
by A. W. Beasley
Crescent Hill Methodist Church
Louisville, Kentucky

"What Time Is It?" — $25
by Frank B. Stanger
First Methodist Church
Collingswood, New Jersey

"You Can Be Different" — $25
by Jack Williams
The Methodist Church
Goodman, Mississippi

"Participation in the Lord's Supper" — $25
by Wendell A. Meggs
The Methodist Church
Chapmansboro, Tennessee

Laymen

"Heaven" — $35
by Mary Lee Butts
Nashville, Tennessee

"Be Watchful" — $25
by Pvt. Friedrich G. Lackmann, Jr.
APO 696
New York, New York

MARCH
Tract of the Month

Heaven

by

Mary Lee Butts

This is the Easter tract containing

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- A personal conviction
- A testimonial of the reality of Life Eternal

$2.00 per 100

Tract-of-the-Month Club Members will receive this tract automatically.

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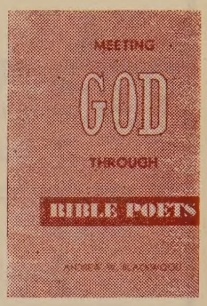
15 cents. Eight copies, $1.00. 10 cents each, in lots of 100 or more.



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You will want your young people to read this compact booklet as they consider choices for their vocations. It will be of great value to teachers of youth as they long to help them face the invitation to become servants of Christ.

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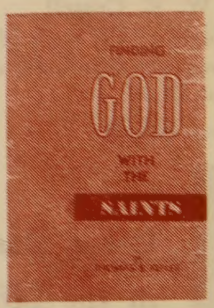
Finding God With the Saints

by Thomas S. Kepler



It is a help to the present-day Christian to read of the devotional life of the ancient and modern day saints for they make wonderful friends, says Kepler in this potent little booklet.

After telling how to find strength from the devotional classics, he outlines a simple minimum pattern for saintly living. This will challenge anyone who is willing to accept disciplines which can be practiced by churchmen of the present day, rather than be content with "a few spiritual crumbs which fall from God's festive table," as this stimulating author expresses it.

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A Men's Club Project to Begin in Lent

It Will Make a Difference in Your Church

What Is It?

- The Parish Cultivation Plan is a simple and direct means of cultivating family worship, private devotions and grace at meals.
- This plan that will deepen the spiritual life of your church.
- By this plan the pastor and the church reach each home in the parish regularly every two months. A ministry that causes members to feel drawn close to the church, the pastor and each other as they read the same Bible passages and meditation in THE UPPER ROOM each day.

How Does It Work?

- Determine the number of homes in your church, include prospective members and those homes represented in the church school or other church groups. Provide each a copy of THE UPPER ROOM.
- Each one should know it is from your church and pastor. A rubber stamp may be used. (See picture below.) A duplicated letter from the pastor should be included. Here he has the opportunity to emphasize the value of a family altar, church attendance and personal spiritual cultivation, as he carries a message of friendly concern for each member of the family.

Who Should Do It?

- For the men to get the thrill and joy of this venture, they should prepare the copies for mailing. Only six times a year! Many hands make light work, and an assembly line makes for fast work, good fun and fellowship. The men will take it, too, as they visit in homes, hospitals, rest homes, and institutions.

What Does It Cost?

- The value of the ministry is so great that many churches make no effort to make the plan pay financially—many churches, of course, find it is self-supporting and some pastors insist that it makes money.
- Whatever your attitude about financing the plan, the basic costs are the same. THE UPPER ROOM in quantities of ten or more costs five cents per copy. Mailing envelopes are available through THE UPPER ROOM at one cent each. The coin envelopes printed like the sample below are furnished free to users of the plan.
- If the pastor gives some emphasis to the coin envelope in a paragraph in his letter, suggesting that the recipient help make this ministry continue; if he will occasionally give the plan and family devotions commendation from the pulpit and in his bulletins, then the plan will probably become self-supporting.

O.K. We're Sold! How Do We Begin?

Get your club to underwrite the plan until the coin envelopes make the project self-supporting. (Emphasize the ministry of THE UPPER ROOM—not the self-supporting feature.)

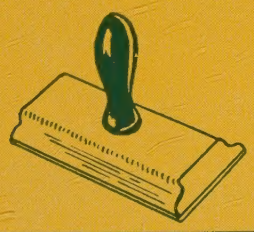
Order one copy for every family in your church, prospective members and constituency list.

Order the same number of mailing envelopes and coin envelopes.

Get pastor's letter prepared.

Form your committees and watch things hum! Then see the spiritual life of your church deepen.

For more details write for folder, "Into Every Home."



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The Upper Room

In Every Home in Our Church

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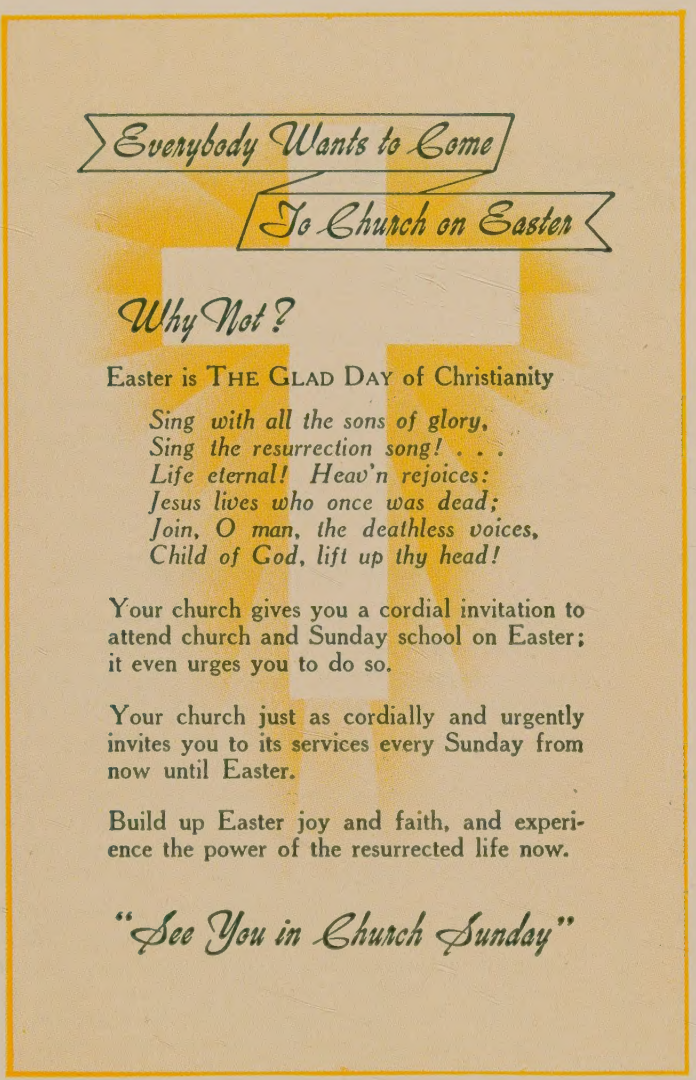
NAME _____


Everybody Wants to Come
To Church on Easter
Why Not?
Easter is THE GLAD DAY of Christianity
Sing with all the sons of glory,
Sing the resurrection song! . . .
Life eternal! Heav'n rejoices:
Jesus lives who once was dead;
Join, O man, the deathless voices,
Child of God, lift up thy head!
Your church gives you a cordial invitation to attend church and Sunday school on Easter; it even urges you to do so.
Your church just as cordially and urgently invites you to its services every Sunday from now until Easter.
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"See You in Church Sunday"

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